JANUARY–MARCH 1961

Crossroads

A Study and Program Magazine for Adults

VOLUME 11 : NUMBER 2

THE strong, clean lines of a strong, clean man grace our CROSSROADS cover. The sculptor, Ernst Barlach, has rather simply, but nonetheless truly, called him *Singing Man.* This whole issue of CROSSROADS deals in one way or another with the grace of God and man's confident appropriation of that grace, both of which are so elegantly represented in this bronze statue.

The new series of ***Christian Faith and Life*** articles, "Was Jesus a Teacher?" plunges into the central affirmations of the gospel and presents a consistently fascinating account of man's restoration to his true humanity through Jesus Christ.

The **"Parents' Discussion Group"** opens with two articles on grace and the family.

The Christian Round Table gets into the strange world of Augie March (and, of course, Saul Bellow), nails down some issues that arise because of wealth, and provides some resources for study of the important period that directly preceded the coming of Jesus Christ.

The articles of general interest in the front of the magazine present a disturbing series of reflections on areas of our modern life in which, apparently, grace is not abounding. William Stringfellow's "Christianity, Poverty, and the Practice of the Law," for instance, is devastating to the people who are concerned with refined, sleek consumption—treated in two articles by F. Bruce Morgan. Not much singing is going on in some indeed *most,* places of our modern American world. If we sing anything, most of us are singing the blues, very low and very sad, because life has become impossible.

But, in spite of all, the singing man sings on, reminding Christians of the grace they cannot get away from, offered by a God who wants *all* his people to sing.

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A STUDY AND PROGRAM MAGAZINE FOR ADULTS

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The Universal Pursuit: IDOL-MAKING

By Robert V. Smith

The crisis of our civilization is deep, deeper than many of us are prepared to admit. The civilization as it existed prior to 1914, and, in a way, until 1930, has gone. The cathedral of common norms and ideas, standards, and hopes disintegrated from within. . . . The feelings of restlessness, uncertainty, and divers suspicions as to the coming peace reveal our vague premonitions that the very foundations of our future world have to be reshaped and rebuilt. Present humanity lives only on some fragments and crumbs of the legally organized world.[1]

THIS indictment was made in 1944 by a former American who has since chosen to support the Communist revolution in his native country of Czechoslovakia. The indictment strikes home. As we look around us seventeen years later we do not see much that could be presented as evidence against it. What is the significance of the present wave of juvenile delinquency, of the seeming apathy on college campuses, of the search for security and the tendencies toward conformity among youth and adults alike?

Many complicated explanations of the modern social breakdown exist. For instance, some people blame the crumbling of our foundations on new ways of thinking that have increasingly captured the imagination of the past several generations—ideas and convictions that whatever seems to work best at the moment *is* best for the moment, that whatever cannot be proved "scientifically" by experiment, observation, and duplication is at least questionable and may be dangerous folly, that the only permanent characteristic of human life and society is the inevitability of change, and that change practically equals progress. Others have blamed the present crisis on the disintegration of family life, or on the powerful influence of the large organizations in our institutionalized social and economic life, or on the growing importance people place on popular acceptance and status as the prime value in life, or on the debilitating fear of nuclear war. But no matter what the causes of the sickness evident in society, the existence of this sickness gives us little encouragement to claim that our civilization is vigorous and robust and on strong, unshakable foundations.

The Popularity of Murder

Perhaps the most telling criticism of our life is that we have crumbled from within. If we could blame this loss on something other than ourselves, on forces beyond our control, we should at least feel better. But when we take a long look at things, we discover that we can't.

For example, we have tried to blame juvenile delinquency on slums, broken homes, low economic status, psychiatric problems, and all the rest. However, Dr. Melitta Schmideberg, director of the Association for the Psychiatric Treatment of Offenders, emphasizes that "each society must expect the crimes that are tolerated or sometimes even encouraged by popular attitudes. Punishing the few individuals who have actually committed an offense has far less effect than the way society in general disapproves of and suppresses the very idea of a particular crime." [2]

This leads me to ask, Do we really want our children to be better? Do we abhor violence, hate, greed, and pride enough? Many critics of television programing have struck out at it, saying that it popularizes lust and violence; and the advertising agencies and TV producers all protect themselves by saying that they

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[1] From *Doom and Resurrection*, by Joseph L. Hromádka. Copyright, 1945; Madrus House, Richmond, Virginia. Used by permission.

[2] From "What Can We Do About 'J.D.'?" by Virginia P. Held, in *The Reporter*, Aug. 20, 1959. Copyright, 1959, by The Reporter Magazine Company. Used by permission.

give the public what it wants. The rigged quiz shows are excused by the producers because they are entertainment. And the interesting thing is that when a person suggests that since the air belongs to the public the Government might consider closer regulation of programing, he may be accused of being a communist.[3] To be sure, we must have the freedom to become insensitive to violence, to overlook murder, and to fail to support the social agencies that work with our depressed groups; but if we exercise this freedom, we must be willing to accept the consequences. The norms and values that at one time were accepted by society as absolute no longer have any force, not because they have become any less true or authoritative than they were, but because society has rejected them.

Cork Anchors

But something must be added. Too often the things our society *has* identified as absolute have not really been absolute at all, but have simply been *our* version of what is absolute. Or to put it in Biblical terms, we have worshiped false gods rather than the God of our fathers. It may be difficult for us to see this, because we live in a culture that has not flatly, specifically, and unequivocally rejected Biblical faith. A person who must live under vocally anti-Christian communism can see the ambiguities of living in a "Christian" culture better than we can ourselves. Thus, a Christian living in communist East Germany compares his predicament with ours:

"'Little children, keep yourselves from idols,' warns the first epistle of John. Our idols are all too recognizable to be able to falsify our faith or teachings [he meant the downright anti-Christian ideals and principles of the communists]. Your idols are far more dangerous. They are, if I mistake not, loved, honored, and respected to a large degree within Christendom itself."[4]

Here a man who faces daily the need to resist idolatry points out to us that we worship our own strength, our own culture, our own freedom, our own form of government rather than the God whom we avowedly worship.

The Christian faith says that nothing deserves worship but God, nothing is absolute save God alone. As a result, on earth there is no true absolute. People may treat *things* as though these were absolute. They may give their total loyalty to some thing, some idea, some cause, some book, some person, or some institution. They may create an absolute by giving some thing complete authority over their lives, thoughts, and actions. But such commitment to a thing does not make that thing a true absolute. It makes the thing an idol, a substitute for God who is not and cannot be a thing. To put a thing in the place of God is idolatry, whether it is a block of wood or an idea. So we must listen with hearkening ear to what The First Letter of John says: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (*ch. 5: 21*).

We know too well how apt we are to be idolatrous. Such a consciousness complicates our problem as Christians almost unbearably. We want a firm anchor to windward, such as a book, an institution, a person, or a code of law. We want the security of an absolute book such as the Bible, an absolute institution such as the church or the family, or an absolute person such as a father or an all-seeing wise man. But if we find the source of our security in such absolutes, we almost certainly will become idolatrous about them.

The reason we are so frantic in the face of our collapsing absolutes is that we are not equipped psychologically to have our handy idols taken away from us. We can trust God if he provides us with dependable and tangible answers, but we cannot trust him if all he makes clear are his promises. We really do not want to be free of guardians, crutches, and shields. It is better, we feel, to keep life at a distance. We want to be bound to some absolute source of security that we can touch. Paul's letter to the Galatian Christians deals with this very common problem. In effect, this letter states: "Do not shrink from your Christian freedom by giving yourselves over into a new slavery to the law or to the passions. Learn to use your freedom wisely, and do not surrender to anyone or anything save the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Authority of God

To those who say that the foundations of civilization are crumbling, the Christian's response can only be, "It is not surprising." If we are to stand with such giants of the faith as Isaiah, Paul, Luther, Calvin, and

[3] This once happened to the writer. The person applying the name was a public relations man for a major radio network.

[4] From "Die armen Verwandten," by Gottlieb Zonesius, in *Unterwegs*, 1952, as quoted in *Outside the Camp*, by Charles C. West. Copyright © 1959 by Charles C. West. Used by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

others, we can only affirm that idols have to be carried and cannot save us. (See, for example, *Isa. 45: 20 to 46: 13.*) We must not baptize the Western world and thus try to make its values, forms, and institutions absolute, or we shall surely become idolaters.

But the world we live in still demands that we make judgments about the authority that some things or ideas should have over our lives. We cannot shrink from this task and say: "Whatever the popular way of living and thinking happens to be right now is good enough for me. All the people can't be too wrong." As Christians we cannot believe that one man's opinion is as good as the next, that all ideas and purposes are equally worthy. If we do believe this, then we are affirming that God has not spoken in this world. How do we tell the difference between things? How can we say what should and what should not have authority over our lives as we live them day by day? These are the questions to which we want answers, but we cannot find answers without recognizing a primary fact.

We must begin by recognizing that God's authority is total. All the things that may speak authoritatively to us can speak only through authority derived from him. For example, the Bible has authority over us only as it gains this authority from God marching "up and

A PROGRAM ARTICLE

down through the Bible magisterially, making his Word come to life at any point throughout its length and breadth." [5] And it can be added, "The Bible is the Word of God, not in the sense that God's Word is petrified in a dead record, but that the Bible is vivified by his living presence to convey what he has to say." [5] This same kind of thing can be said about the church. The church becomes authoritative for us only as God in Jesus Christ moves it to speak forth the gospel.

But this solution does not satisfy us. We are still confronted with the necessity for decision. Christ did not bring us complete instructions for every possible situation, but only freed us from our sinful selves that we might respond to God's call as we hear it in our world. We are in a situation not unlike that of Job. He found himself confronted by his wife and three friends who told him various things about his suffering. He couldn't accept any of their ideas because he knew in his heart that he did not deserve to suffer because of guilt. In his integrity, thinking as hard as he could about it, he couldn't see how he had offended God. The result was that he refused to accept any of the opinions of his wife and friends as authoritative for him. Had he done so, he would have denied his own integrity as well as his God. Finally, when he was directly confronted by God, he discovered that his sin was his desire to protect his own integrity, to idolize himself. This he recognized as the truth which had to be authoritative for him. Here in God he finally recognized the true absolute.

Jesus Christ Is Lord

And so, faced with the necessity for decision, what do we do? Are we as Christians afraid to face the fact that we must tell the world that Jesus Christ is the final and complete revelation of God? He is the only absolute, the only reality worthy of complete authority over our lives; but perhaps we are afraid to see that he is the one who has all authority over us, because he demands so much. Is our unwillingness to be free going to silence us? Is our fear of our own freedom so great that we must make some thing or things absolute and authoritative? Must we worship idols? If people in our culture cry out for neat and thorough authorities to command their thoughts, their acts, their souls, we have been called to reply that Jesus Christ is Lord.

We can make such a reply; but it is irresponsible to stop with that. We fail as Christians if we do not bring our best critical intelligence and our deepest commitment to bear on problem areas in which persons seek guidance in our day. For example, the evidence suggests that sexual behavior is changing in our time. Apparently something has happened to the sexual code that, for a long period, has been the one to which society subscribed in its public statements and which the church thought it taught. In this area and in many others, Christians all too often stand back and refuse to dirty their hands with the problem. The failure of this specific item in our society's moral code has many causes, but one of the biggest has been the unwillingness of the church to face it openly in the light of the Christian faith. Only in the last twenty years has modern society's discussion about sexual morality been public rather than private. In fact, most of this discussion has come from avowedly secular psychologists, biologists, and sociologists rather than from the Christian churches or their members.

There is no simple answer about sexual morality; but whatever conclusions about it are reached by our modern world, we can be sure those conclusions will not be Christian so long as Christians default on their responsibility for dealing with the problem.

If a person seeks to have others simply tell him "on good authority" what the answers are to his particular problems and dilemmas, he is bound to be disappointed. For there are no handy "three easy ways" of telling a good authority from a bad one. This decision must finally be made by each Christian in each new situation he faces. He has the responsibility for the decision; it is possible for him to make it wisely because he is a Christian. The only true freedom is Christian freedom, and only a man free of all pretense can honestly decide what is authoritative or absolute for his life.

[5] From *The Authority of Scripture*, by J. K. S. Reid. 1957. Used by permission of Harper & Brothers.

The local church will be having an increasing opportunity to serve those who go

to college on a scooter

Based on material prepared by Harry E. Chase

THE rapidly increasing birth rate during and after World War II greatly enlarged what is now the college-age population. In addition, the sharp rise in American living standards during the past fifteen years has made it possible in our day for an increasing proportion of this expanded college-age population to continue their education past high school. These two factors combine to indicate that now and in the years immediately ahead an unprecedented number of people will be going to college.

Furthermore, because the educational and residential facilities of our colleges and universities cannot fully accommodate this horde of new students, nor can many of the students and their families pay the increasingly higher tuition and campus-living costs, it is inevitable that a great many—if not most—of today's students will go to college while continuing to live at home. These are the *commuting* students. Sometimes they have been designated "off-campus" students or "day" students. They are not an entirely new phenomenon in the world of higher education, for since the beginning of universities and colleges, some students have lived off-campus. Also in some regions of the United States—particularly in the large urban areas—commuting to the college or university campus has long been a customary and recognized aspect of educational life. However, the proportion of off-campus, commuting day students has now increased so sharply and suddenly that a new and fresh understanding of their special problems must be sought.

What "special problems" do commuting students face? How does their experience compare with that of students who reside on the campus? In what ways is the academic life any more difficult for commuters than it is for their on-campus cohorts? Last year, thirty-five Presbyterian university pastors (directors of Westminster Foundations) at institutions with especially large groups of commuter students met in Philadelphia to discuss these problems. A few of their conclusions are shared here.

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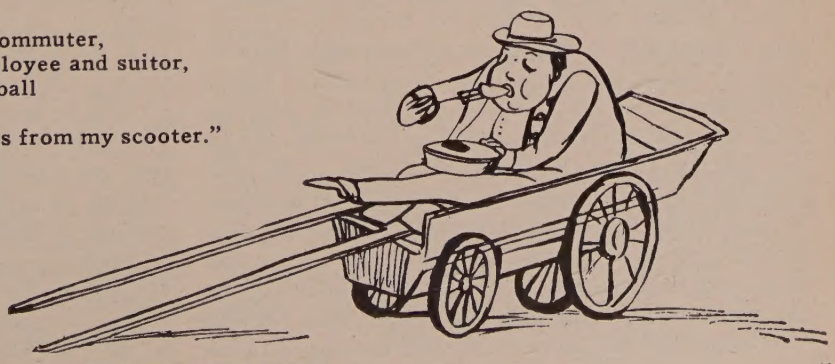
The Blurred Image

Whether college students live on campus or commute, they are in the process of changing from adolescents to adults. They are moving out from under parental authority, trying to establish their own place in society, attempting to discover who they themselves —as young adult individuals and not merely as members of their parents' established and identifiable families—really are. At this juncture they are psychologically "in transit," and so are in special need of a stabilizing framework, a clear-cut role as a college

Once a young college commuter,
Who was part-time employee and suitor,
Said, "Looks like a ball
Until you recall
That I do all these things from my scooter."



student (rather than a confused, multiple role as a student, teen-ager, adult, wage earner), and a supporting group of fellow students.

The person who has moved away from home and physically resides on the campus of his college or university tends to find these psychological needs met by fellow students surrounding him in the college student body and by the traditions of the institution. The continuous center of his attention is definitely the campus, with its established social practices, ethical values, and cultural interests. Within this arena he may be able to identify himself definitely as an individual person who is primarily a *college student,* whether or not he works part time on or near the campus to earn part of his way.

The commuting student, however, does not reside physically on the campus. The college or university is not the continuous center or arena within which practically all his activities and interests are focused and where he can retain a continuous self-consciousness of being primarily a "college student." He probably lives at home, where he may still be identified by his parents—and in his own mind—not as a college

student but primarily as a dependent adolescent member of his parents' family. He probably works part time, if not full time, at a job located anywhere within driving distance of home—that is, practically anywhere in the urban area. At work he will most likely be recognized by those around him, and in his own eyes, not as a college student but primarily as a low-paid and naïve young wage earner. When he goes to church, he may be recognized not primarily as a college student but rather as an embarrassing leftover from the senior high church school department who is "still going to school," or as some kind of fledgling adult who will be chasing around on the loose until he gets married and settles down. He dashes to the campus to take his courses before, between, or after work; he may spend five or six continuous hours every day on the campus, or he may dash in for an hour or two in the morning and again for some periods during the afternoon or in the evening. Anyway, at least for that part of his day, he can be recognized and can see himself for what he may hope he is really supposed to be—not a dependent adolescent, not an apprentice wage earner, not a leftover senior high church school pupil, not a bewildering, low-flying young adult on the irresponsible loose, *but a college student!*

For many commuting students this continuous switching from role to role can have the disconcerting effect of watching a television picture that is vertically out of adjustment: the image keeps flipping over. Whereas the on-campus student is continuously identifying himself as slick Joe College by measuring himself against the college's established social practices, ethical values, and cultural interests, the commuting student is busy trying to keep his identity straight as he constantly switches roles and sets of values from home to work to college to church and back to home again. This constant flux and alternation of the commuter's outlook may seriously (although not always critically) affect his chances of getting a solid, substantial, coherent, and effective college education. It will certainly have some effect on his home life, and it may cause a conflict of interest between the time demands of his job and the study requirements of his classes.

We Are Poor Little Lambs Who Have Lost

Too often a commuter student may feel that he is not really a full-fledged member of the campus community. Because he does not live there continuously but must dash on campus to classes and hurry away again to his job or jobs every day, he may feel that he does not have time to learn about or belong to many of the great variety of campus groups. He has too many brief, peripheral contacts, too many interrupted and unfinished conversations, to allow him the luxury of feeling that he is "in." Rather, he is more apt to feel like a campus visitor or a campus customer, who periodically "pays his nickel and takes his choice" from a cafeteria collection of cataloged curricular offerings.

Such a lack of intimate, leisurely developed rapport —either with his fellow students or, more importantly, with the faculty—and such a discontinuous series of contacts with the main function of the college, which is the activity of teaching, can sometimes produce in a commuter student an impersonal, mechanical relationship to the campus. This may explain the lack of "school spirit" or the absence of "campus pride" on many urban commuter campuses. The commuter's lack of continuous contact may also cause him to develop a "time-clock" mentality toward the experience of college learning. Instead of living, moving, and having his being within the academic community, he may get into the habit of arriving as late as possible, leaving as early as possible, and thinking about the campus as little as possible when he is away from it.

The commuter student may suffer other side effects. His discontinuous and impersonal relationship to the college or university can often reduce his sensitivity to the total life of the campus as a *community* of stu-

lents and teachers. And if he fails to participate in he corporate life of that community, with its organizations, clubs, student government, social, professional, and honorary fraternities, athletic activities, social events, and so forth, the commuter student may discover that his efforts to go to college never fully bear fruit in a stimulating educational experience.

So Little in Common Any More

When it comes to home relationships, a commuter student may sometimes have to face a problem that does not arise for on-campus students who are away from home. The problem is that some parents cannot see their commuting son or daughter as primarily a college student. They suffer the same confusion as the commuter student himself in trying to make clear sense of his several roles. He is still living at home, just as always, occuping the same room he has always had, sitting in the same place at the dinner table, receiving the same telephone calls, driving the same car, chasing around the same way with various wild friends, and utilizing the same household (and occasionally financial) services supplied by his parents. Although he is now working, perhaps, and going to classes down there at the college or university rather than at the high school, he is apparently still the same growing child they have seen around the house for the past eighteen or twenty years. To be sure, he is getting older, and changes are bound to occur. After all, he changed quite a bit a while back when he was in junior high school. His parents may feel that they understand about all the changes that take place in adolescents. They weren't born yesterday. They had to grow up too! But even if he is growing up, Mom still makes his bed every morning, and as long as he lives in that house he is still the son of his father and a junior member of his parents' household. What is so all of a sudden different about him just because he is going to college?

The purpose of a college education is, presumably, to break down the parochial and reactionary attitudes of the adolescent and to enable him to see more clearly the size of the world and the forces that make it what it is. Although the parents of most college students may eagerly expect to see great changes take place in their offspring, they actually may not see many clear-cut signals that this educational process, this intellectual metabolism, is going on if their child is a commuting student; for these changes do not appear suddenly, full-blown like exploding popcorn. For most students it takes time. Furthermore, the parents may well not expect the changes to take the forms they do: new mannerisms, strange figures of speech, new vocabulary, a new awareness in the eyes of their former child, different interests, radical changes and rejections—mostly experimental—of the values inculcated by the family. Thus, although the parents may have had some idea, and even hope, that their son or daughter would "grow up" as a result of going to college, they may resist or resent the unexpected changes that actually begin to emerge, and they may try, consciously or unconsciously, with varying degrees of anxiety, to discourage the new mannerisms and figures of speech, dispute the new ideas, and disparage the new insights and points of view.

If parents are startled or caught off guard by the changes in their college-attending child, they may at best be suspicious and at worst condemn. With parental apprehension, they may become afraid that their offspring will be lost to them and to their way of thinking and talking. Although these fears and apprehensions are likely to afflict unprepared parents equally, whether their children are commuting to college from home or are living on the college campus, the parents of a commuting student have much the greater opportunity to try to influence their child and "protect" him from the very college education they had encouraged. Ironically, such protective attitudes and acts may cause the student to do just what the parents most fear: reject them. Too frequently, the tragic result is that parents—especially those whose children are commuting students—do not feel great reward and pride but only tension and rift, separation and loss of communication, because they "have so little in common any more" with their college-enrolled son or daughter. It is sad to see a family work and save, plan and strive, in order to send a child to college—and then to see the fulfilled dream shatter the family.

A PROGRAM ARTICLE

Liberal Education or Basketweaving 1-A?

Many, if not most of today's college students, must work, at least on a part-time basis. Frequently this is necessary because a person has more ambition than money or because the family rift has become so wide that the person finds he must live away from home in order to survive psychologically. In some cases, working seems necessary if a student is to maintain his status symbols—perhaps a car, or certain clothes—or if he is going to have enough spending money to exercise his freedom of movement socially. Often it is a combination of such factors that makes it necessary for a student to work.

Especially if his job pays well or is time-consuming, and is located away from the campus both geographically and culturally (for instance, if he is a shoe salesman in a downtown shop, or a mechanic in an automobile agency; if she is a telephone operator, or a file clerk in a department store), the student is again faced with a confusion of roles and a blurred image of himself. Is he a college student, or is he a wage earner? Is he a budding intellectual, an up-and-

(*Continued on page 18*)

CHRISTIANITY, POVERTY, AND THE PRACTICE OF THE LAW

By William Stringfellow

It is to East Harlem that I came from the Harvard Law School—to live here, to practice law here, to take some part in politics, to be a layman in the church. In what I now relate about East Harlem, I do not indulge in horror stories; even less do I attempt to be analytical, to probe the causes of poverty, or to venture how any of the issues of poverty can be resolved.

On the contrary, I try only to describe the milieu of my own life and work as a lawyer, and from that to emphasize the practical as well as moral ambiguity of social policy and legislation which intends to cope with slum housing or delinquency or narcotics traffic or public welfare or the like. Social engineers are beguiled when they suppose that any of these issues can be isolated from the rest, or that, in dealing with any, the particularity of the situation of each person can be minimized or ignored. Poverty means not just density of population or large families or debilitated housing or infestation of vermin or the absence of privacy or obsolescent sanitation or low income or unemployment or retarded education or the congestion of the street or indifferent politicians, but it is all of these tangled up in the life of a person. At least that is the way I am exposed to poverty every day.

The Vulnerability of Poverty

Poverty is an essentially personal burden, as . . . riches are also. Poverty is my very first client in East Harlem—a father whose child died from being bitten by a rat. Poverty is a dope pusher who wanted to learn from me his rights if arrested because he knew that would sooner or later happen. Poverty is a widow on welfare whose landlord cuts the heat knowing that winter will end before the complaint is processed. Poverty is an addict who pawns the jacket off his back to get another "fix." Poverty is a young couple who married only to obtain public housing but now have no grounds for divorce in New York and are tempted to collusion. Poverty is a boy who wants to be adopted because his mother is alcoholic. Poverty is the payoff to a building inspector not to report violations of the building code. Poverty is the attempted eviction—finally defeated—from a project of a family whose son was thought "undesirable" by the project manager. Poverty is the wife of an addict with whom I worked out a budget to manage while her husband was in prison. Poverty is a Puerto Rican shopkeeper whose store was stoned when he tried to relocate south of 96th Street. Poverty is a kid in trouble who comes to my place in the middle of the night because his foster parents have thrown him out. Poverty is the relentless daily attrition of contending with the most primitive issues of human existence: food and cleanliness and clothes and heat and housing and rest.

Poverty is an awful vulnerability.

The Anatomy of Poverty

East Harlem is the northeast corner of Manhattan, bounded on the west by Fifth Avenue and on the east by the Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive, and running north from 96th Street to the Harlem River. In that geography—roughly equivalent to a square mile—live between three and four hundred thousand people, mostly Puerto Rican and Negro. Nobody is really certain of the number; apparently nobody has ever counted. An old man in the neighborhood can recollect no census taker ever bothering to canvass his block.

Anyway, population density is very great here. One social worker computes that if the entire population of the United States lived in as severe proximity as in East Harlem, they could all be housed in half the area of New York City.

I know that on the block where I live, East 100th Street between First and Second Avenues, more than

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WILLIAM STRINGFELLOW initially went to East Harlem as legal counsel to the East Harlem Protestant Parish, but resigned in order to devote himself fully to private practice in the East Harlem neighborhood. He has been a consultant to the New York State Commission Against Discrimination, an adviser to the New York State Council of Churches on narcotics legislation, and served as an election frauds investigator. He is special counsel to the Episcopal Diocese of New York in the matter of charges made by clergy of corruption in the New York City administration. He was the chairman of the National Conference of Christianity and Law held in September, 1958, under the auspices of the National Council of Churches and the Danforth Foundation.

Four thousand people live in twenty-seven decrepit tenement buildings. The predecessor tenant in my apartment—which is about twice the size of a dormitory room at the Harvard Graduate Center—was a family of three adults and five children. When that many people live in that little space, practically speaking, it means that someone is always in the toilet, the sink is generally in use, the stove is going most of the time—when not to cook, then to heat; if everyone has his own bed, then there is room for no other furniture; and if there aren't enough beds, then they are used night and day in shifts.

Even if rents are cheap, the buildings are old and crowded, repairs are infrequent and predictably ineffectual, sanitation facilities are obsolete and overtaxed, health and building inspectors—even waiving suspicion of corruption—are usually unavailable and anyway overworked, the landlords are often absentee and inaccessible, the rent commission is bureaucratic and slow, the tenants are ignorant of their rights and mostly too poor to enforce them. The tenements and alleys are alive with vermin, and the rats are hungry and predatory.

Most workers from the neighborhood have marginal jobs which are the first to be cut when the economy constricts, but even in times called prosperous, jobs are insecure for them. Illiteracy, for one thing, is a common barrier to employment for many, including the young, and, public policy notwithstanding, racial discrimination in hiring still survives in New York. If there is a criminal record or a history of narcotics addiction or association with—not necessarily membership in—an "antisocial" gang (it is virtually impossible not to have such an association in East Harlem), then jobs are hard to find or hold. A talented and responsible worker, in such circumstances, will compile such an erratic résumé of part-time and short-term jobs that potential employers are dissuaded from hiring him. Moreover, his personal capabilities and occupational skills have no chance to be concentrated and to mature, which frustrates any actual freedom to choose a trade. Meanwhile, East Harlem's public education which might mitigate this frustration for some actually aggravates it, and is underequipped, understaffed, and retarded because teachers commute to school from outside the neighborhood and know little of the life of their students in the tenements or on the street.

Unemployment compensation is an aid only to those who have had a minimum regularity in work during a year, and welfare aid in New York City, which is, I suppose, the most liberal in the country, depends very much on who the investigator is and whether a given case fits the categories invented by the sociologists. The classifications in public welfare can sometimes be grotesquely oblivious of actual human need.

Where there is employment in a family, chances are that for every one with a job there are two or three out of work, and one wage has to support eight or ten people. At the same time, large families, high rent, and ethnic discrimination prevent many from moving to other parts of the city, and the public-housing projects replacing the tenements are no panacea. Gross family income determines entitlement to public housing and frequently employable members of a family remain idle or fraudulently conceal jobs in order that the family will not be dispossessed of a project apartment and forced to move back to a slum tenement.

Life amidst such congestion and conditions is as much a problem of aesthetics as economics. Even when there is income to buy things, there is little prospect of having personal property, of owning something all your own, which no one else touches or uses or trespasses. And there is no such thing as privacy, no place or chance to be alone. For the children, there is no place to play indoors; for adults, no place to take leisure in the home or entertain a guest.

A PROGRAM ARTICLE

The street, therefore, becomes more a *locus* of life than the tenements—especially in hot weather, when the tenements steam and stink. There is some escape in the street: for play there are puddles and rubbish and alleys to roam and stickball and checkers and blackjack and craps and sometimes a cockfight. There are juke boxes in the candy stores, so there is dancing in the street. There is vicarious joy in the esoteric religious sects in storefronts on the street. There are places to sit—fire escapes and car fenders and curbstones. In short, there is society in the street, not only in the gangs, but among neighbors from the block.

But the street is a precarious, primitive society: it is the locale of bookies and the numbers racket, of pimps and dope pushers and payoffs and other para-

sites of poverty. The street is violent: twice I have myself witnessed shootings there. For some, the street means the threat of raids from gang rivals; for addicts, there is the risk of being fingered by a stooge purchasing his own immunity from arrest; for most, there seems to be fear of harassment by the police. The street is a jungle.

Politics has not provided fundamental remedy for the poverty of East Harlem. At one time there was, of course, Vito Marcantonio, whose Congressional incumbency—whoever else backed him—rested in East Harlem upon personal service, not upon public policy. He found jobs, stayed evictions, arranged hospital care, secured legal aid. When he was surpassed in such services by public welfare and private philanthropy and social work, he fell. But Marcantonio was only a political personality, not a political boss, and there is little to indicate that he threatened, or cared to challenge, the ruling political power in East Harlem. That power rests upon neither personal service nor public policy, but essentially upon patronage—not only judgeships and municipal jobs, but licensing and contracting and the like. That power rests upon the preservation of vested economic interests in jobs and in real estate and, it is said by some, in gambling and narcotics traffic and prostitution. In any event, where political power represents economic investment, whether lawful or criminal, the poor are apt to be excluded from politics. In East Harlem they are, practically speaking, disenfranchised. In some election districts here, far more people are unregistered for voting than those who are registered, and no effort is made to reach or register or enroll them, much less admit them to the councils of the local political club. There are other factors which enforce the disenfranchisement of the poor: for one, there is no viable political opposition whatever in East Harlem, and attempts to constitute one have been ridiculous and abortive and mainly served to deepen the fear and cynicism of people toward politics. For another, the incumbent power has some characteristics of a dynasty, practices nepotism, and is hypersensitive to any potential opposition. A great many people do not know how to read, and anyway no effectual means of political communication or discussion exist. And, in my own opinion, ethnic discrimination is inbred in East Harlem politics and, for that matter, in the politics of the entire city of New York.

The anatomy of poverty is very intricate.

Poverty and Existentialism in the Law

To practice law in East Harlem requires more than a professional identification with the kinds of cases that arise there. It involves more than being knowledgeable about the neighborhood, and something different from sympathy for people. Humanitarian idealism is pretentious and turns out anyway to be irrelevant. . . . It is, rather, important to experience the vulnerability of daily life here. It is necessary to live within the ambiguity and risk the attrition of human existence here.

In a way, it is even more simple than that: it is just essential to become and to be poor.

I do not say this in a moral sense, but precisely the contrary, I do say it in a theological sense and, therefore, in the most concrete and even practical sense (for unlike philosophic morality, theology deals with the care of God for all men in the common life of the world as it actually is now). As a practical matter, therefore, in the practice of law in East Harlem, it is essential to enter and share life there just as it is. I suppose, in some other situations, it may be possible for a lawyer simply to be a mechanic, but cases in East Harlem invariably require face-to-face encounter with a client. For that communication, it is important to have known a client as a person before the case arose, to have seen or met or talked with him around the neighborhood, to have accepted him and to have been accepted by him, to have lived in the same place and similar circumstances as his own, and to expect a continued relationship after the case is closed.

This is repeatedly confirmed, I observe, in the lower criminal courts in New York or in the family court there, where there is apt to be very great similarity in the fact situations in case after case, and the enormity of the case load each day precludes the court or the attorney or the probation officer from knowing more about a party than his name and the most abbreviated version of the facts. When this takes place, the hearing and disposition of a case is a ritual, not the administration of the law. As much might be accomplished by remote control if somebody would invent a machine.

But if a lawyer must himself be immersed in the life of the place where he practices, then the law itself must be genuinely implicated in and wrought from the realities of human existence. That would help to free the law from pretentious moralism and from superstition and obsolescence as well. Many of my clients, for instance, are young narcotics addicts apprehended in possession of drugs for their own use. The law condemns mere possession of addicting drugs as a criminal offense, failing to make any distinction between the commercial pusher in possession for traffic and the addict in possession for personal use. Apparently popular sentiment overlooks the same distinction and superstitiously imagines the addict as a fiend prone to violent antisocial behavior. Yet addicts in fact are fairly tranquil, and there is impressive medical authority that addiction is an illness, certainly as clearly as is alcoholism, requiring medical and psychiatric therapy and supervision. Penal confinement of the addict who is not a pusher is even less defensible because of the absence of professional staff and facilities for hospitalization and rehabilitation of addicts in prison. Nor are there provisions to care for addicts immediately upon their arrest; they endure instead going "cold turkey," that is, the convulsive agony of abrupt and absolute withdrawal from drugs.

It is important to live within the ambiguity of daily life and risk the attrition of human existence.

DIEGO

By Alberto Giacometti

The law is not only obsolete in this instance and indifferent to crucial facts about the matter with which it deals, but I would argue that it works vindictively. One client of mine is now in prison for the fifth time in about as many years for illegal possession of narcotics. For him there has been no remotely competent treatment for his addiction while in prison, and the stigma of his convictions for narcotics offenses cuts off his other possible remedies. It is, when he is released, practically impossible for him to secure employment, neither public nor private counseling agencies specialize in or have much experience with addiction cases, practicing psychiatrists cost a great deal of money, the amateur analysis and therapy of social workers and ministers can do more harm than help, he has no friends outside the city to whom to turn, no means to go to them if he had them—and so the cycle goes—deepening his frustration, breaking his morale, aggravating his self-preoccupation, accelerating the prospect that he will return to drugs, increasing the probability of his arrest again and his imprisonment.

For him, and for many more, the law and the enforcement of it represent a special jeopardy because he is poor. An addict with income to pay for private care—and there are plenty of them—runs relatively little risk of arrest. It is the addict who is poor, who lives on the street, who once arrested is under closer scrutiny, who deals with a pawnbroker for whom it is convenient or profitable to tip off the police, who may resort to theft to buy a "fix," who must be wary of other addicts who might exchange his arrest for theirs, who has no privacy—no place to hide, that is the addict who is arrested time and again. Yet he is the least important arrest that could be made, the most expendable link in narcotics traffic; he pays the lowest price for stuff which is adulterated anyway; he only has contact with one minor operative in the astonishingly intricate narcotics syndicate.

Other cases might be named as examples of the need for the law and the lawyer to be really immersed in life as it is and to be free enough from moralism, superstition, and obsolescence to cope with it. Nowadays in New York's family court, social workers, as a practical matter, replace not only legal counsel but judge and enforcement officer as well. And politics supplants law in providing counsel for indigent defendants in certain cases. In instances like these, the integrity of the law and the work of the lawyer are usurped because both have become too isolated from actual life. . . . The issue for the law is whether it stands at the intersection of life, aware of the self-interest of adverse contentions, free to be the advocate of each. For that, the law and the lawyer must be radically exposed to the existential situations of each party and person.

For that, even the poor must have counsel.

Poverty, Charity, and Christian Vocation

The poor need counsel, but what I say here is no special pleading for more charity of the conventional sort for the poor from lawyers or anybody else. Rather I try only to distinguish between conventional charity and the vocation of Christians among the poor.

Conventional charity—whether governmental or voluntary—like all aspirations of men to discern and do what is good—can cope only partially, impersonally, temporarily, superficially, piecemeal, with the issues which assail the poor, but it is impotent against the fundamental reality represented in each of those issues, that is, the threat of death not only eventually, but on every side in every single moment. The awful vulnerability of the poor is in fact the common vulnerability of every man to death. And from the power of death no man may deliver his brother, . . . nor may a man deliver himself.

Yet it is exactly to the consignment of all men and all of history to death to which the Christian faith is addressed. For Christians confess that the whole burden of human existence is death and insist that the stark fact of death in all the works of men—even the works which men imagine are good—must be confronted, not ignored. Indeed, Christians see that death is the substance of and consequence of the estrangement of men from God, and within that, of the separation among men and of the hostility between men and the rest of creation.

To become and to be a Christian is not at all some escape from the world as it is, nor a wistful longing for a "better" world, nor some commitment to generous charity, nor fondness for "moral and spiritual values," nor self-serving positive thoughts, nor persuasion to splendid abstractions about God. It is, instead, the knowledge that there is no pain nor privation nor humiliation nor disaster nor scourge nor distress nor destitution nor hunger nor striving nor anxiety nor temptation nor wile nor suffering nor frustration nor poverty which God has not known and borne for men in Jesus Christ. He has borne death itself on behalf of men, and in that event he has broken the power of death once and for all.

That is the event that Christians confess and celebrate and witness in their daily work and worship for the sake of all men.

To become and to be a Christian is, therefore, to have the extraordinary freedom to share the burdens of the daily, common, ambiguous, transient, perishing existence of men, even to the point of actually taking the place of another man, whether he be powerful or weak, in health or in sickness, clothed or naked, educated or illiterate, secure or persecuted, complacent or despondent, proud or forgotten, housed or homeless, fed or hungry, at liberty or in prison, young or old, white or colored, rich or poor.

For a Christian to be poor and to work among the poor is not at all conventional charity but a use of the freedom for which Christ has set men free.

The awful vulnerability of the poor is in fact the common vulnerability of every man to death.

the Sleek Giant

By F. Bruce Morgan

TODAY in America millions of people are fantastically busy working to make money and spend it. Now, as always, there are "bosses," those comparatively few people who must decide what activities and what work the millions of working people will do to earn their incomes. And there are yet other people and groups busily trying to influence these millions of people to spend their income—their money and their time—in certain ways, for certain products and services.

In the middle of the twentieth century, this economic activity—the interplay of vast and innumerable decisions—is amazingly complex, whereas once upon a time—say a hundred and fifty years ago—the economic process was fairly easy to understand. It was then self-contained, for the most part, within the bounds of the simple autonomous village or town community, among small shops and craftsmen, farmers, mills, and small factories. People worked and were paid, bought raw materials, sold finished goods, and generally served one another within a fairly limited area. Each person could see rather clearly how he fitted in with his neighbors in the various economic transactions of the village or town. But now, because of the tremendous economic development and integration of our nation, these relations are no longer so readily understandable.

Therefore, we face two striking problems today. For one thing, who are the real bosses—the responsible controllers and decision makers? What individuals or groups are rightly responsible for guiding the massive productive power that America represents? Once it was obvious: the factory owners possessed their plants, controlled what their companies produced, and were responsible—legally, morally, ethically—for their business. But in our day it is not at all clear who is responsible for the decisions about what our great productivity will produce.

The second striking problem of our present economic life, which will be discussed in the next article, has to do with the quality of economic choices: In a period of great abundance, what is worth striving for? But we turn now to the problem of discovering who is responsible for the direction and control of the massive economic power of our nation today.

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Is the Model-T Obsolete?

Most of us might describe the American economy as an "individual enterprise system," in keeping with much of our traditional economic picture of ourselves. We envision a multitude of relatively small individual enterprises—businessmen, shop owners, company owners, craftsmen, servicemen, plumbers, electricians, storekeepers, the full catalog of the Yellow Pages. All these carry on a busy, mutually benefiting activity of making, buying, selling, and distributing goods and services—the raw material for our volatile and amazingly productive system. When we look at this model of the American economic system, we see no great conglomerations of economic power. Rather, we see a well-integrated and clear-cut economic structure. Those who own the various business enterprises make their economic decisions and are responsible for the innumerable small units of economic activity—the products and jobs and services—that their enterprises produce.

But this economic picture of ourselves is hopelessly out of date; anyone who takes part in modern business life sees a quite different model in actual operation. A person may be a stockholder, director, manager, executive, wage earner, union leader, union member, white-collar worker, farmer, housewife, or simply a consumer (and most of us are in several of these categories). Whatever his role, he is aware that he is caught up in a business system that has grown into a huge, sleek giant. The modern model is as different from the nineteenth-century village economy as a Boeing 707 is from a Civil War observation balloon.

To be blind to this development is unhealthy, for nothing is so dangerous to a society as the attempt to explain itself in terms of a nostalgic illusion. Thus it is important to see some of the changes from the traditional model that contemporary reality reveals. What are some of the giantistic developments that have

taken place over the past century? Here is a partial list: (1) the development of the "limited liability joint stock corporation," (2) the establishment of the legal fiction whereby the corporation achieves perpetuity as an immortal legal person, (3) the great movement, which began at the close of the nineteenth century, to merge comparatively small companies into large corporations, (4) the pyramiding of corporate control through many tiers of relatively small stock holdings, (5) the concentration of great blocs of wealth and power in a small number of mammoth corporations, (6) the enormous economic power concentrated in labor unions and their leadership, (7) the rise of big government and its intervention and control exercised in almost every direction, (8) the development of a new phenomenon—the increasingly autonomous, nonowning managerial class.

All these business developments have been highly significant departures from the traditional model of the American economic system, submerging individ-

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uals and whole companies in massive structures. As a result, the clear-cut lines of responsibility for business decisions and their consequences have all but dissolved in the interminable arteries and veins of a depersonalized economic monster. Enormous power has been concentrated in the hands of small groups of men in a relatively small number of vast corporate structures—small groups in management, union, and government. Along with this, and accompanying it, the meaning of responsible ownership has atrophied. It is true that more Americans own corporate stock than ever before; but this great dispersal of stock ownership—the widest in history—only assures that the overwhelming majority of stockholders shall be in no position to make the responsible decisions for the direction of the corporations they "own." They can do no more than rubber stamp the program of the directorate—and most stockholders don't even bother to go through the motions of doing as much as that. For example, no single one of A.T.&T.'s 1.7 million stockholders holds more than a thirtieth of one per cent of its stock. In such a situation, most stockholders really do not own part of the corporation at all—if "ownership" still means the right of control and use—but simply own a piece of marketable paper. Also, they own a certain expectancy: they expect their stock to pay off in dividends and increased value.

The Faceless Corporation

In reality, stock ownership cannot be considered ownership of the corporation itself. For, what is a corporation? It cannot be described exclusively in the traditional terms of land, plant, and machinery. A modern corporation is made up of far more than its physical assets alone. Its "property" must also include the managerial and labor skills of its personnel, its productive organization, its sales organization and techniques, its advertising image, its established and projected markets, its brand name, and its stock-market record. In other words, a corporation in the modern sense is a vast and intricate web of sociological and psychological interrelationships and skills working in and around and from and upon its maze of physical assets.

Who possesses, controls, directs, uses, and safeguards—that is, in the traditional sense, "owns"—the modern industrial installation? A. A. Berle, Jr. wrote recently that *nobody* possesses it except the plant manager or the night watchman—and obviously neither of these is the owner! And this holds not only for the great industrial corporations but also for the great corporate structures of organized labor and for the great bureaucratic structures of the Federal Government. All three of these—industry, labor, and government—have great power to influence the economic life of the nation.

Thus, although in the past a company's owners were responsible for its direction, in our day the innumerable small stockholders who "own" a corporation must give over the responsibility of control and direction to a small managing group. This separation between ownership and responsibility has been widened even farther by a new form of "absentee ownership." Vast accumulations of corporate holdings have come into the hands of insurance companies, pension funds, and mutual investment funds—in other words, into the hands of trustees who do not really own even the stock but buy it and manage it with no aim but the most reliable long-range profit for the actual stockholders they represent. These trustees, understandably, are reluctant to "vote" the stocks of which they are *only* the managers. A great power vacuum is thus opened up. The votes of these stocks held in trust go by default in favor of the small management groups.

All this indicates that the traditional individual enterprise system, in which ownership, possession, control, and responsibility go together, no longer has much meaning. The countless stockholders who now "own" a particular corporation have almost nothing to do with its operation. To be sure, we do not have a "socialistic" economy, if by "socialistic" we mean an economic system in which the Government owns and controls all the nation's economic production and allocation. But neither do we have the old traditional business model of individual free enterprise. Decades ago, Walton Hamilton suggested for our system the name "corporate socialism." As David T. Bazelon has recently described our situation, we are "dominated by great faceless corporations 'owned' by no one and run by self-designated managers." As he suggests, in our system "ownership is irrelevant—the main thing is control."

Rules to Match Realities

If this is an accurate picture, than control becomes all-important! Effective direction of our economy will be exercised increasingly by the nonowning personnel employed by corporations as managers and executives. But, even more, the economy will be directed by the complicated intermingling and counterbalancing activities of the great variety of more and less organized groups—including the state—which continuously surge through and around the economy.

Because for vast ranges of our economy the owners no longer play a decisive role, it is necessary for American society to clarify and define the responsibilities of the managing groups who do control modern business institutions. Thus the time has come for the nation to conduct a most rigorous examination to see where our economy places its centers of power and control. If the modern economic process is to function effectively, the community must act to fix responsibility properly, to expose, penalize, and check abuses of power and control, and to halt—and if necessary break up—those concentrations of power which threaten the real freedom and mobility of the economy. That is, the rules for conducting the affairs of our business system —our "corporate socialism"—must match the present realities. Such action by the total community can be expressed through regulation, taxation, stimulation. For instance, both Kaiser and Reynolds Aluminum Corporations grew to their present size as a result of the Government's concern that the Aluminum Corporation of America should not continue to dominate that vital industry by holding over it almost total monopoly power.

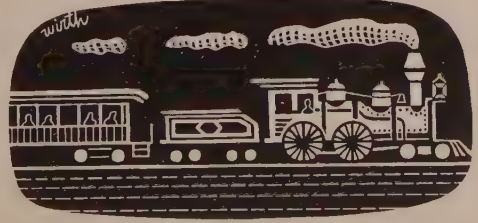
It is our good fortune to live in a society with many centers of power—corporations, trade associations, unions, the state, the press, the universities, public opinion, the churches, professional organizations, great foundations, and philanthropic enterprises. These groups are continuously counterbalancing, stimulating, and competing with one another, and in this process no single power center can take over exclusive control and direction of society. Such an interplay is healthy; and the Christian insight that power tends to corrupt those who hold it should make the Christian community vitally alert to help maintain and strengthen this pluralism in the location and control of power.

In the past, the counterbalancing, countervailing centers of power in our pluralistic society have tended to function rather automatically, without conscious direction or careful regulation taking accurate account of all the various forces. But in the complexities of our modern economic system, the rights and responsibilities that have fallen to the various groups who control particular blocs of power in the total community must be carefully assigned, assumed, and tended, rather than left to function in a chance hit-or-miss fashion.

During the last few centuries a structure of law was built up defining the rights and duties inherent in the ownership—the possession and use—of private property. This structure of law was based on the assumption that ownership and control of property went together. But now it is becoming continuously more difficult for individuals either to accumulate or to control large amounts of private property in the form of savings and stockholdings. Most of the people in our present economy cannot stake their lives and the security of their families on the amount of private wealth, that is, the stocks and bonds, in their safe-deposit boxes. Rather they must depend on the only property they do have: their jobs—the wage-producing functions they carry on in the business activities of their companies—and in the multitude of fringe benefits, such as vacations, pension security, and medical protection, that stem from those jobs. Thus the structure of law is beginning to recognize and give body to the modern realization that a job or a function in the economy is akin to private property. People have certain rights and duties related to their jobs in much the same way that they have responsibilities and privileges concerning their cars, houses, and mink stoles. In effect, much of the activity of labor unions in the past several decades has moved in this direction. The legal definition of property rights in terms of holding a job is quite as crucial to the executive-managerial class as to other wage earners. Otherwise, all are in danger of becoming property-less proletarians.

The Community's Task

With the American economy's growth toward magnificent, chrome-plated giantism, we are forced to find new ways of controlling its power and specifying its responsibilities. It is a highly complex social and cultural organism, made up of many forces and groups. If it is to remain reasonably stable and vigorous, these centers of power cannot be expected simply or automatically to control or be responsible for themselves. Therefore, the total community must continue to set before the economic system its specific responsibilities and give it a clear sense of direction.



THE GOLDEN EGGS

By F. Bruce Morgan

WHY are we as individuals and families earning and spending our money? For what purposes are we as a nation expending our wealth of human and natural resources? Once we could say confidently that we were working to raise our standard of living. We were a poor people who needed more of everything for a better, more comfortable, and satisfying life. But nowadays, for most of us, such a simple and confident assertion is ridiculous. Then what are we working so hard for? In other words, the second striking problem of our modern American economy has to do with how and for what goals we use our very abundant income, which comes to us in both money and leisure time. As someone said recently, "After affluence, what?"

Our domestic economy has been transformed from one of scarcity to one of abundance. David M. Potter has recently made a striking analysis of the emerging American character as that of a "people of plenty." In earlier days, people in our country found it hard to get enough to eat, enough clothes to wear, or houses to live in. But in the past fifteen years we have begun to be aware that our economic problems have taken a new twist. Our burgeoning productivity, the great stores of purchasing power pent up by World War II and the Korean conflict, our rapidly rising standard of living, our incredibly persuasive advertising techniques, the availability of mass communication for soft-sell and hard, and planned and artificial obsolescence—all these factors have carried the American economy out of scarcity and into grand abundance.

To be sure, this is not universally true in our country. There remain groups who suffer from quantitative imbalance, injustice, and privation (for example, the migrant workers in agriculture); and quantitative justice must be sought for such groups. Moreover, there is the rest of the world to consider. The less-developed economies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America still need our help to build up their capacity for large-scale production. There is need for an enormous total increase in world wealth and a more equitable distribution of the fruits of an expanding world economy.

But for the most part, we no longer face the quantitative problem of giving every American an opportunity to receive his fair share. Our difficulty now lies in our not knowing what to buy next. The great concentrations of economic power in our society were formed in order to supply or to solve the quantitative problem. Now that they have solved it, their force and power remain as a continuing pressure upon all of us to step up at ever-increasing tempo our consumption of the products of our giant business machine. Thus our mighty economic process, in magnificently solving the massive quantitative problem, has thrown the nation into a new predicament: how to handle or respond to the pressure from a gigantic production-line business system that dictates, whether it desires to or not, the pattern of our consumption choices.

Freedom for Personal Choice

Students of economic theory and policy are much more at home when dealing with quantitative problems than when trying to formulate and promote a uniform standard of living for the population. When it comes to decisions about what is good, better, or best, who can define "the good life" for other people? We are inclined to force upon others our own outdated interpretation of what wealth is to be used for. In the past, for example, our version of "the good life" was symbolized by an expensive show of wealth—big houses, big cars, expensive furs, a ten-to-three daily work schedule. But such a standard—or any other we hold—is not necessarily the final truth, the only acceptable cultural norm by which people today should make their economic choices.

In our day, the pressure to continue using our wealth as we did in the past could cause us to lose the real cultural gains that might accompany an increasing superprosperity. As Kenneth Boulding has cautiously suggested, it appears that we may have developed a surplus of economic organization in our country—a supply of productive and marketing resources and skills far outrunning the demand for them. We are so busily force-feeding ourselves that we have no time for taste. Our economy is producing everything so easily and rapidly that we have substituted a superficial slickness for really exciting cultural creativity. That is, our productive economic structure is so busy trying to get rid of what we so overabundantly produce that little time or opportunity is left for seeking new and creative ways to spend our money, time, and abilities.

Perhaps the time has come for us to seek changes that will free our people from the overwhelming pressure to consume for the sake of consumption according to patterns of choice dictated from outside. In other words, the American people need a new freedom from mass cultural coercion so that they can exercise more personal discrimination and free selection in the use of their time and money. We must have freedom from the coercive pressures brought to bear upon the people by those who, out of quantitative economic considerations alone, are all too sure that they exclusively can provide us with the only acceptable blueprints and building materials needed for the good life.

The Choices We Face

Such a change as this, which could free our economic process from its quantitative hangover, can hardly "just happen" on a helter-skelter, hit-or-miss basis. The change into a society of free and uncoerced abundance can probably be brought about only by community decisions with a very broad base, that is, by the total community in the form of the state.

What new decisions leading to such freedom would require this kind of deliberate and responsible social formulation? They are decisions about the fundamental allocation of our economic resources. For one thing, the total community must make some intelligent choices about the relation of advertising, its quantity and content, to the mass-communications media, and particularly to the television programing that advertising currently subsidizes. Also, we shall have to decide as a people whether we shall seek even more leisure time at the expense of increased productivity, or whether we shall go on producing more and more things at the expense of increased leisure time. Again, shall we use more and more of our wealth for raising the consumption standards of our population, or would it be wiser to utilize our wealth by heavier taxation, for example, to raise the often deplorable and arid quality of our public education and to create more and better educational and recreational facilities?

Aside from domestic decisions, we must choose either to eat up the fruits of our economy largely at home—living slothfully on our fat—or, far more adventurously than ever before, to embark on an enterprise of co-operation with the less-developed economies of the world, an enterprise as daring in its own way as were the implications of the Marshall Plan for the developed economies of Western Europe after World War II. Such an adventurous enterprise of economic co-operation would stretch our economic, financial, commercial, and industrial ingenuity beyond our most impressive accomplishments in the past. It would call for maximum gains in productivity all along the line, as well as for possible tax increases at many points.

We must make decisions about the kind of image we shall convey to the peoples of underdeveloped economies who are seeking rapid quantitative rise in living standards. What image shall we present to them of the qualitative cultural fruits of a quantitative movement toward plenty?

These are the kinds of decisions which must be made by a nation that has everything.

Time Payments

Americans work to earn money and "make a living." Everybody knows that. But perhaps we do not realize so clearly that Americans also earn leisure time. Our wages come in the form of both money and many free hours in which to do as we please. The enormous increase in leisure time is one of the fruits of our increasingly productive economy and is truly a form of income.

Americans have chosen to take an expanding portion of an increasing income in leisure rather than in money. Only well-to-do people have this choice open to them. In the past, and in most of the world today, this choice has been open only to a tiny minority. Today, we in the United States seem on the brink of being, as a whole people, a leisure class. Traditionally, we have considered ourselves laboring people, with almost no "time off" except to eat and sleep and restore our physical resources for the next day's work. We now work seven or eight hours a day for five or five and a half days, but still tend to have a mental outlook conditioned from the period of history when our fathers worked twelve hours a day for a full six days a week.

Our grandfathers were deprived of any opportunity for frivolity, gaiety, lightheartedness, or relaxation; and over the years we have continued to think of shorter working hours simply as increased time for entertainment at what is often the most superficial level of relaxing stimulation. To be sure, a certain amount of technically produced audience-reaction

A PROGRAM ARTICLE

chuckles can be satisfying and relaxing. But with our increasing productivity, the prospect of shorter and shorter working hours seems to contain only the ghastly promise of more and more people spending more time and money on the mere entertainment of their idleness. Vast amounts of money and organizational genius are being used to supply increasing quantities of entertainment and recreational services at a level now acceptable to a people newly come to leisure. The mass-communications media today are obviously catering to the possibility of more American leisure time through much of their publishing and their programing.

In the past the American people have placed great value upon financially compensated work. Thus it is very difficult for us to think of leisure not as "time off" but as freedom to work at what one wants to do

and enjoys doing, to be creatively one's self, without the pressure of hard financial necessity. Yet this is the real meaning and value of leisure. Since in our tradition work is largely what one does for money, we tend to ignore from the outset any possibility of finding some serious work to do—a creative vocation—in our leisure time. In spite of this mental blindness, however, we can observe many individuals finding a far more satisfying vocation and sense of fulfillment in their "avocations" than in their financially compensated labor.

We are not suggesting some grim and compulsively serious notion of the meaning and value of work as the desirable spirit of leisure. Rather, it is possible to imagine a future time when the American people can exercise a liberated and debonair creativity that can be the sheerest of pleasure. But this free spirit of creative and serious leisure-time work will not just come about all by itself. The qualitative cultural coercion embedded in the present supply of service and entertainment facilities must be inhibited by serious community decisions if the valid and rich possibilities of leisure are to be realized.

Threshold

The economic machine of American business and production has magnificently accomplished its purpose of supplying the people's quantitative needs in every aspect of material life. We now face the necessity of changing, modifying, or controlling its headlong thrust toward ever-increasing productivity—to slow down or utilize more creatively the production of golden eggs without killing the good old goose—or find ourselves lost and bereaved in our own superabundance.

The problem of quantity that pervades all our economic decisions, and the problem, discussed in the previous article, of responsible control over our great productive process: these are the perils, the challenges, and the promise of our time. They provide an exciting shape to the economic adventure of this generation.

To College on a Scooter

(*Continued from page 7*)

coming young businessman, an apprentice craftsman? Is he primarily a responsible adult employee trying to improve his chances of success by filling in the embarrassing chinks left open from high school? Or is he primarily a responsible adult college student, trying to finish his education by earning enough money somewhere, anywhere, to get him through?

The college student who lives on-campus, even if he must also work part time, may not find it too difficult to keep himself in focus as a *college student,* because home base for him is the campus with its collegiate, if not academic, atmosphere. The commuting student, however, may have more difficulty retaining in his mind his identity as a college student because for him both home base and job location are out in the unacademic, non-ivy-covered world.

In either case, the necessity of holding a paying job in order to finish his education puts a person on the spot when it comes to the use of his time. As a genuine, authentic *college student,* his studies have first priority. Whether he completes his college education in four years or must stretch it out over one or more additional years, he must grant himself all the time he needs to do his academic work satisfactorily. Unless he is remarkably brilliant, if he tries to cram a full college course and a full-time—or even solid part-time—job into a single four-year period, his attempt at getting a college education can become simply a weary, fatiguing chore rather than a stimulating adventure in the life of the mind. In his desire to squeak through college as hastily as possible and with a minimum of full-time study in a full-scale college course, the student may be tempted to sign up as far as possible for the "easy" classes, the convenient classes, or those which seem to have the most "practical" value. If this happens, he may fail to receive a true education at all, on the academic college level, and end up merely with some incidental and unrelated intellectual scraps and, perhaps, a seminegotiable diploma.

"It Looks Like a Ball Until You Recall . . ."

Because of increasing student bodies, overflowing campus residence halls, and the mounting costs of higher education, a growing proportion of students will be living at home while they go to college. The traditional stereotype of carefree Joe College cheering away his academic years on the tree-lined campus among ivory towers and ivy-covered halls at some isolated college town has been dissolved. Nevertheless, by keeping in his mind's eye the clear image of a studying participant in the campus community, with mutual patience and grace between himself and his family at home, and by retaining a sense of balance and proportion while he works to earn his tuition and expenses, a commuting student can find a valuable and fruitful college education—even from his scooter.

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NOTES *for Program Planning*

All five articles in the front section of this issue are "program articles"—resources for programs. At the outset of preparation, your planning committee should review the seven steps described briefly in last quarter's "Notes for Program Planning."

I. "Who or What Controls You?"

Meeting Goal: To explore what it means to claim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Resources: The first "program article"; *A Theology of the Laity,* by Hendrik Kraemer (The Westminster Press, 1958; $3.00), Chs. 3-6; *What the Christian Hopes for in Society,* edited by Wayne H. Cowan (Association Press Reflection Book, 1957; 50 cents), Ch. 4, "The Christian Gospel and the American Way of Life," by David E. Roberts; *Studying the Bible in Small Groups,* prepared by the Department of Adult Program, Board of Christian Education, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (order from Presbyterian Distribution Service; 15 cents).

Key Points to Consider:

1. What are the common ideas, standards, and hopes of our society? How do they become idols?
2. If God is our only ruler, how can we obey him?
3. Christians make their decisions in the light of Christ, to whom the Scriptures witness. How, then, can adults study the Bible effectively?

II. "To College on a Scooter"

Meeting Goal: To see more clearly how the congregation might serve its college-going members.

Resources: The second "program article"; also, a local university pastor and college commuters.

Key Points to Consider:

1. How many college students in your church live at home? What conflicts tend to hinder their efforts to complete their education?
2. University pastors recognize that their campus ministry cannot adequately serve many commuting students. How can your congregation help serve them? What do these college students need? (Beware of hastily conceived activity programs.)

III. "Risking Vulnerability"

Meeting Goal: To consider the implications of faith for a Christian's occupation or profession.

Resources: The third "program article"; *In His Service,* by Lewis S. Mudge (The Westminster Press, 1959; $3.00), Chs. 1, 3, 4; *Work and Vocation,* edited by John Oliver Nelson (Harper & Brothers, 1954), pages 9-81, 116-185, 199-211.

Key Points to Consider:

The article describes what it has meant to one person to take the gospel seriously. Your group should learn about the abominable slum conditions and the tragic significance of poverty. But the primary goal is to ask, "How is my vocation to serve Christ related to my daily work?"

1. If politics is not a *fundamental* remedy for the sick and evil conditions in present-day American life, where might the fundamental remedy lie?
2. Why must a lawyer, or any other working person, be immersed in the life of the area in which he works? In your situation, what might it mean "to experience the vulnerability of daily life"?
3. How do "conventional charity and the vocation of Christians" differ?

IV. "How's Business?"

Meeting Goal: To understand better the shape of present-day American economic life.

Resources: The fourth "program article"; *Power Without Property,* by A. A. Berle, Jr. (Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1959; $3.75); *Life in the Crystal Palace,* by Alan Harrington (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1959; $4.50).

Key Points to Consider:

1. What experiences of your group members would confirm or negate the assertion that "the clear-cut lines of responsibility for business decisions and their consequences have all but dissolved"?
2. In our modern business system, where are the centers of power? Do these need more public scrutiny?

V. "What to Do with What We Never Have Enough Of?"

Meeting Goal: To raise the two questions stated at the beginning of "The Golden Eggs."

Resources: The fifth "program article"; also, *The Affluent Society,* by John K. Galbraith (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958; $5.00), Chs. I, VII-XIII, XVIII, XX-XXIV; *People of Plenty,* by David M. Potter (University of Chicago Press, 1958; paper, $1.35).

Key Points to Consider:

1. What evidence is there in your community that there remain groups who suffer from "quantitative imbalance, injustice, and privation"?
2. What alternatives have we to consuming for the sake of consumption? How can we be freed from "mass cultural coercion"? What public policy decisions might lead to "free and uncoerced abundance"?

THEME FOR THE YEAR : *Jesus Christ Is Lord*

Unit I—How to Understand the Fourth Gospel

Three Articles Concluding the Study of The Gospel According to John Begun Last Quarter

By Norman F. Langford
Editor in Chief of the *Christian Faith and Life* Curriculum

14

THE HOUR HAS COME

Read *John, ch. 12.*

Now we come to what is both the end of the beginning and the beginning of the end. It is the end of the beginning, because all that has come before—all Jesus' mighty works and words—is a kind of prelude and preparation for what Jesus all along intended to do for the redemption of mankind. After this chapter there will be no more public acts or teachings until Jesus is arrested, crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. After the events and sayings recorded in *ch. 12*, Jesus will go into seclusion with his disciples until his adversaries come to destroy him.

Chapter 12 also pictures the beginning of the end. Jesus makes very explicit what he is about to do. He declares himself openly as the Messiah and, by the same token, announces in effect that he can be the Messiah—the Savior of his people and the Redeemer of the human race—only by becoming the Suffering Servant. Here, in this chapter, is the transition from all the signs he has done to the great, *effective* act of death and resurrection.

The Summing Up

In this chapter the author draws together the main themes with which he had been preoccupied throughout the first eleven chapters of this Gospel. At the beginning of our study we said that we should find in John three outstanding themes that would enable us to interpret the Fourth Gospel in its entirety. Let us recall these, in abbreviated form: (1) the movement of Jesus' life from one great event to another, with the words (events in themselves!) forming a kind of commentary on the things that Jesus did; (2) the identification of Jesus' "hour of glory," often referred to throughout the Gospel, with his hour of humiliation and defeat; (3) the conflict between belief and unbelief as the public is confronted by Jesus Christ.

These themes are very clearly indicated in *ch. 12*. The chapter begins with a pointed reference to the raising of Lazarus, and the reference recurs in *vs. 9-11*. *Eventfulness* is in the writer's mind. At *v. 37* we are reminded that Jesus had done many signs (or miracles) in public. Moreover, in this very chapter Jesus does another sign, though not one miraculous in nature: he enters Jerusalem triumphantly in precisely the manner foretold in *Zech. 9: 9*. Yet even the acclaim that met him is related to the miraculous sign of the raising of Lazarus, for we are told, in *v. 17*, that "the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness." The narrative immediately continues, "The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign." Why his foes were determined to put him away is then indicated, in *v. 19:* "The Pharisees then said to one another, 'You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him.' "

THE CHRIST CHILD IN THE TEMPLE
By Francis Ndegwa (Kikuyu Tribe, Kenya)

Verses 20-33 are crucial for understanding this chapter and the Gospel as a whole. Here we find the second theme clearly stated. For it is in these verses that Jesus indicates that the glory of God will be served only by the Son of God yielding up his life. Furthermore, the Son's own glory will be established, and his rule over the world will begin when he is lifted up from the earth *on the cross* (see *vs. 31-33*).

The third theme—the question of belief and unbelief—as usual runs throughout the chapter. Unbelief is served by that figure of pure evil, Judas Iscariot, who is roundly denounced as a thief when he objects to the alleged waste of the precious ointment—the ointment of death—placed on Jesus' feet. The fear that people will believe in Jesus in alarming numbers, which leads the authorities to plot Jesus' death, is indicated in *vs. 10* and *11* and *v. 19*. At the same time, the timidity of the believers is indicated in *vs. 42-43*. The hardness of heart that rejects belief, despite Jesus' signs, is described in *vs. 37-40*. Finally, the concluding passage of the chapter (*vs. 44-50*) is centered on the question of believing in Jesus as over against rejecting him—and this is spoken of in terms of accepting or rejecting God himself. "He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. . . . For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak." On the other hand, "He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day."

Thus we find, closely interwoven, the themes that have governed the whole construction of the Gospel up to this point. How poignant is the situation, at the end of Jesus' public ministry among men and at the beginning of the concluding events of his life on earth, is suggested by *v. 16*, for there we are told that even his disciples did not understand the Messianic sign on the occasion of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem—this time, to die. The disciples understood only after Jesus was glorified by death and resurrection, which led them to remember and comprehend all that had happened. At this point, therefore, we find Jesus completely and utterly alone—preparing, without any moral support whatsoever, and without any understanding on anybody's part of what he was about, to act once and for all to accomplish the redemption of mankind.

For the Sake of All the World

With his marvelous sense of architecture, the author of the Fourth Gospel follows *v. 19* with the incident of the Greeks who came to see Jesus. The Phari-

sees had said, "Look, the world has gone after him." Bearing out the force of the term "the world," we are immediately told of the coming of persons from outside Jerusalem to interview, or at least to look at, Jesus. We have had hints before, in the Fourth Gospel, that the mission of Jesus was not for his own nation alone, but for humankind. We have also had hints that *only* when he had died and risen from the dead could his mission to the whole human race be achieved. This is made very clear in the passage beginning at *v. 20.* Jesus gives no direct answer to the request of these Greeks to see him. On the contrary, when he hears of the Greeks who want to see him, he immediately begins the discourse that commences at *v. 23:* "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified." From this saying he goes on to point out that a grain of wheat must fall into the earth and die before it can bear fruit. Then he says, "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (Cf. *Matt. 10: 39; Mark 8: 35; Luke 9: 24.*) Jesus' efficacy as the Savior of mankind *depends* upon his death and resurrection at Jerusalem. It would avail him very little to go abroad and preach to the Greeks. The precondition of a gospel for Greeks and for everybody else is the death and resurrection of Christ. Having come to this crucial point in his career, there is no turning away from it to seek some other channel of preaching or teaching that could at best have only limited effectiveness. The words, "The hour has come," ought, therefore, to be seen in the closest association with the idea of the gospel going abroad into the world. It will be for the apostles to carry that gospel abroad, and for Greeks and others then to believe. Jesus' part is to stand where he is—and die. The overwhelming paradox of

Jesus' ministry lies just in the fact that *it is by his becoming nothing that he becomes sovereign of the world.*

Glory at Last

"The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified." Thus speaks Jesus, in response to the information that some Greeks wish to see him. The theme of glorification, which has been so prominent throughout the Gospel, is now elaborated in *vs. 27-33.* Up to a point, Jesus' prayer in these words has some resemblance to the prayer at Gethsemane. Here, however, Jesus does not simply end by asking that the Father's will be done. Rather, he openly recognizes in his prayer that the terrible prospects confronting him represent what he came into the world to do and to endure. "For this purpose I have come to this hour."

When he concludes, "Father, glorify thy name," there is a voice from heaven. Evidently it is audible, for the crowd speculates on just what it is they have actually heard. Some say that there was thunder; others believe that an angel spoke to Jesus. This speculation shows the complete inability of the crowd to understand what Jesus is talking about and indicates that these waters are too deep for their knowledge or comprehension. The conversation between Jesus and his Father illuminates nobody's understanding at the time. It is all merely a strange phenomenon, to be explained in various ways that are beside the point. Once again we have in this passage an underlining of the fact that Jesus is utterly alone except for his Father.

Verses 31-33 are of the very greatest significance. Jesus' sovereignty is now established. He is to mount his throne. However, the only throne spoken of is the throne of the cross. He will draw all men to him—but it is immediately explained that this reference is to the death he was to die. Here again we find the supremacy of Jesus, and his capacity to overcome the powers of darkness, dependent upon yielding himself up to death.

All along the line, at every point in these important words of the twelfth chapter, it is made evident that Jesus Christ is almighty precisely by reason of his death, and that to evade this destiny would be to turn his back upon his role as the Son of God, Savior of the world. The later passages in John, describing the trial, where Jesus claims divine (not human) Kingship, bear out the fact that it was in his crucifixion that he was victorious. Whatever Pilate's intentions when he wrote over the cross, "The King of the Jews," he was rightly attributing sovereignty to the crucified.

Verses 35 and *36* should not be understood as a kind of last appeal, which, if answered, would enable Jesus to escape the destiny of the cross. Jesus has already accepted this. He recognizes that the Light of the World will be present in the world—in human form—only a little longer. The appeal is rather to his hearers to recognize what is happening, to have faith, *to believe,* while he is still present among men. In that way they could even yet become "sons of light" and not stumble blindly into the abyss of unbelief. We who were not present in those days may perhaps be thankful that we did not have to make the decision of faith. Even with the light shining high about us, and for so many centuries, we stumble again and again and reveal our own unbelief. What would our situation have

been, had we been faced with the necessity of choosing whether or not we would attach ourselves to One who claimed no power except what he attained in death?

Last Judgment

We have already noted the saying, in *v. 48*, "He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day." A moment earlier (*v. 47*) Jesus had said, "If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world." Why, then, this ominous reference to a last judgment when Jesus has already declared his sole purpose is to save and not to judge?

What Jesus has spoken throughout his ministry on earth is consistently a word of grace. To reject grace automatically brings one under judgment. Precisely by virtue of the fact that he has come into the world to offer forgiveness and salvation, rejection puts those who have rejected him under a cloud. It is not a case of Jesus' taking vengeance upon his adversaries or upon unbelievers. It is a case of hearing a *saving* word and turning away from it. We are told, in *v. 42*, that even many of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of other authorities were afraid to confess their faith. So it was with the crowd, genuinely impressed by Jesus and yet unable to take the plunge that faith involves and incur the risks that faith calls for.

It is the *word* that Jesus has spoken that will be our judge on the last day. We are not confronted by the prospect of a hostile person on the seat of judgment, but rather we are confronted by our own record of belief or unbelief as to his word of grace. Jesus has said the things that he was commissioned to say and has left the decision up to those who have heard his word. Any hostility we encounter in God we have brought upon ourselves. And if we have brought God's hostility down upon ourselves, now or hereafter, it is because we have rejected light, life, forgiveness, healing, resurrection. If we turn our back on these, where is there for us to go?

UNIT I

15

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Read *John, ch. 13.*

The public ministry of Jesus is over. As the fateful hour approaches—the long-awaited hour of glory which is the hour of suffering—Jesus goes apart from the world to be with his disciples in the upper room. In the other Gospels, of course, this is the time of the Last Supper, at which the sacrament of Holy Communion was instituted. John makes it evident that Jesus indeed has supper with his disciples on this last night, but does not describe the institution of the Sacrament. The meaning of the Sacrament has already been dealt with in *ch. 6*. Presumably John assumed that his readers would be familiar with the sacramental breaking of bread and taking of wine, and so he preferred to write several chapters describing the long discourses of Jesus to his disciples on this solemn occasion.

That John is very conscious of the drama he is unfolding is shown in the very first verse of *ch. 13*, "His hour had come." It was to be the hour for leaving this world and returning to his Father. That, however, is not the whole substance of this verse. We read, "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end."

Here we see *the church* clearly emerging. It is constituted of those who are called apart to be Jesus' disciples. It consists of those whom Jesus loves. *His* grace is what brings the church into existence. Nor should we regard as a casual remark the statement, "He loved them to the end." What is "the end" to which reference is made? It is the fulfillment of Jesus' destiny, the completion of his course on earth, his effective act of redemption that he could accomplish only by death. Jesus did not merely, as an ethical teacher, offer a way of light and life and love, bidding his disciples accept it or reject it at will. Beyond what they might think or feel, there lay a further boundary, which was the *action* of Christ in yielding himself up, in pouring himself out in complete and absolute love for others. There was no border beyond which his love would not go. "He loved them to the end" of his life, and with the uttermost energy of his love.

The Washing of Feet

This first verse of *ch. 13* sets the tone for what is to follow and, in fact, interprets the incident told by the Fourth Gospel—the feet washing.

This incident, so beloved by us all, has been subjected to various interpretations. Some would see it merely as an example of humility, and certainly it was an example to be pondered and followed. Others, fascinated by the use of water for cleansing, and by some of Jesus' cryptic words, interpret it in the light of baptism. Here again, we must acknowledge that the thought of cleansing through baptism could hardly have been very far from the thought of the writer of this Gospel.

Yet either of these interpretations, taken alone, seems inadequate. In respect to the first, we have had abundant evidence in our study of John that Jesus at no point represented himself simply as an ethical

teacher or a moral example. As to the thought of baptism, although this may well be reflected in the incident, it overlooks (as does the interpretation along the lines of moral example) the dramatic quality of John and, above all, the dramatic moment that has now been reached.

The key to interpreting the feet washing lies in the fact that it is an act of complete *humiliation* (not merely humility), expressed in loving service. As such, it symbolizes what Jesus is about to do—namely, just as he lays aside his clothes and takes them again, so he is about to lay aside his life for the sake of his beloved ones and take his life again in resurrection. What he does here is the act of a slave, one of whose duties would be to wash the feet of guests. As Lord and Master of his disciples, he lays aside his glory and becomes their servant. Precisely in being this kind of servant—the Suffering Servant—is he entitled to their allegiance as Lord. As indicated in *v. 7,* Jesus does not expect the disciples at present to understand him or what he is doing. "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand."

The incident certainly has ethical meaning, even though the disciples cannot be expected to grasp it altogether until death and resurrection have taken place. However, Jesus does say, in *v. 14,* "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." On this thought he elaborates, pointing out that the servant is not greater than his master and that those who know these things are blessed if they do them. The most telling commentary on the feet-washing episode is to be found in one verse, written elsewhere by the author of this Gospel: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (*I John 3:16*). By living and dying for one another they will be following the Lord's example, and nothing short of that will suffice as an "imitation of Christ."

Coming back to the suggestive use of water, perhaps we can say that what baptism is for is to cleanse from sin through the death of Christ and to initiate disciples into the new life of love. Yet the mystery of the act and of the accompanying words is not wholly cleared up by this comment. For we still have before us the strange exchange of words between Jesus and Peter, in which Peter asks to have not only his feet but also his hands and his head cleansed by Jesus. This leads to Jesus' very strange saying, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not all of you" (*John 13: 8-10*). The reference to all not being clean is quickly explained, by the author, as an allusion to Judas, but the first part of the saying is not so easily cleared up. Commentators are somewhat puzzled by the words, and the difficulty is not lessened by the fact that in ancient times there were different versions of this saying. We need not try to settle the difficulty here. The main point is perhaps clear enough. Peter, not comprehending what Jesus is about to do in his death and resurrection, fancies that the symbolical act of washing is what counts. We need say no more than that Peter could rest assured that his salvation would be taken care of by Jesus' death and that a further extension of the symbolical washing was unnecessary.

Love, the Life of the Church

At the expense of studying the verses of this chapter in order, let us for the moment omit the references to Judas and go on at once to *vs. 31-35.* As we have seen, Jesus expected his disciples to learn from his own infinitely greater self-sacrifice how to live self-sacrificially for one another. A kind of summary is provided in *vs. 31-35* that, first of all, points again, with characteristic insistence, to the hour of glory which is the hour of humiliation. Only by leading his disciples down this painful road will Jesus achieve the destiny for which he came among them. It is in his absence from this mortal life that he will forever be near them.

Now comes one of the most famous sayings in the Fourth Gospel: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (*vs. 34-35*).

It seems strange, at first glance, that Jesus should describe this as a "new" commandment. The command to love one's neighbor was in the Old Testament, and the whole of Jesus' career, as well as his words, cried out for men to have love. Wherein, then, lies the *newness* of this commandment?

Perhaps the clue is to be found in the persistent use of the phrase "one another." Jesus is pointing out what should characterize the inner life of the church, of the brethren gathered together in a common faith and fellowship. Foolish questions have sometimes been raised, suggesting that this "one another" restricts Christian love to the community of the church itself. Obviously, he who so loved the world that he would die for it was not intent upon setting up a kind of secret cult, in which there would be mutual love among all the members but no love for anyone outside. On the contrary, we are told in *v. 35* that all men will know the witness of the disciples, and know whose disciples they are, by virtue of their love one for another.

Love is to be the dominant and conspicuous characteristic of Christ's church on earth. The love that is evidenced among the Christian brethren will be a means to show forth the love of God in Christ for all the world. We who belong to that same church, and are sometimes—and rightly—busy about many good works, do well to recall that the witness of the church is as nothing if love is not prevalent and visible *among the members of the church.* We who often are eager to bring others into the church do well to ask ourselves

into what kind of fellowship we are bringing them. Can we truly say that they will find among our own numbers, in the ranks of church members, the love that others have been taught to look for among Christians? Certainly we are not yet made perfect, and the faults of human flesh—including bitterness, anger, and hatred—are still within the church itself. This, however, is nothing about which we can afford to be complacent. This, perhaps, is what most mars our witness to Christ in the world. How shall anyone know that we are his disciples if we do not have love for one another?

The Traitor in the Midst

And now, before we conclude our study of this chapter, we must take note of the dark colors that appear in connection with references to Judas Iscariot. As we have already observed, even in the feet-washing episode Jesus found occasion to comment that not all the disciples were clean. Then, beginning at *v. 21*, comes an interruption of the main theme of this chapter. The interruption takes the form of the identification of Judas the traitor. Indeed, shortly before this, the discourse had been disturbed (at *v. 18*) by a reference to Judas and recognition that his presence in the midst is part of the Messiah's destiny.

Only to "the beloved disciple," who was presumably John himself, did Jesus indicate who the treacherous person might be. Yet even this beloved disciple, despite the clear identification, appears to have been confused, as were all the disciples, so that even though Jesus in effect pointed out Judas, and the latter quickly left the scene, no one could grasp the fact that this one disciple was being dismissed for his treacherous mission.

There have been many theories about Judas' treachery, some of them quite charitable or at least understandingly analytical. Most of us are acquainted with the somewhat popular view that Judas' real intention was to force Jesus into being the kind of Messiah who was expected. In this view, Judas is almost excused as a zealous hothead. His treachery is looked upon as a product of misunderstanding and hasty judgment—a treachery to which all flesh is heir.

We are not called upon by Scripture to analyze Judas' character. There is nothing in John, or anywhere else in the New Testament, to justify our thinking that here we have anything other than the mystery of iniquity. In the Fourth Gospel, the idea of darkness is highly symbolical. We may rightly assume that the last clause of *v. 30* is no offhand comment: "And it was night." Out of the circle of lightness illuminated by the presence of the Son of God, Judas goes forth into the darkness—and disappears from among the ranks of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Into what infinite night he plunged himself we need not speculate. The judgment of God upon Judas is not for us to make. It is enough to note that, whereas one moment he was within the little company of those who were to love one another, the next moment he was walking through the terrible darkness and silence of the course to which, for reasons we cannot know, he had committed himself.

Jesus, we are told, was troubled in spirit when he spoke of Judas. But let us remember that in *ch. 12* (beginning at *v. 27*) Jesus said that his soul was troubled and contemplated a prayer to his Father to save him from the coming hour. Immediately he rejected such a prayer and prayed instead, "Father, glorify thy name." Likewise, immediately after the departure of Judas, we read, "When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified' " (*ch. 13: 31*). By this extreme evil on the part of a treacherous disciple, Jesus was propelled, as it were, toward that hour for which he had been living all along. Evil, far from impeding Jesus in his destiny, provided him with the occasion and the means to overcome all evil. The man who went out to bring Jesus to the cross brought him to triumph. Stumbling out into the darkness of his own lovelessness, Judas Iscariot, without knowing, brought the possibility of love within the church and toward all men. The tragedy of Judas' own self-will was marvelously reversed, and Jesus Christ, unhalted by any Judas Iscariot, used this evil man that it might be possible for Christians to live—not for themselves, but one for the other. The glorious hour of love's victory through suffering was indeed at hand.

UNIT I

16

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Read *John, ch. 14.*

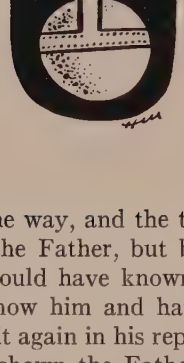
We could appropriately have ended our study of "How to Understand the Fourth Gospel" with *ch. 13*. The final discourses, beginning with *ch. 14*, and the actual Passion and resurrection, constitute subjects in themselves. The essential clues to an understanding of this Gospel have already been provided, and those clues point toward what Jesus had to say in his last words to the disciples alone and to the great events by which Jesus' destiny was fulfilled and the salvation of the world secured.

And yet, it does not seem right to end our study without reference to the beloved fourteenth chapter of John. For one thing, we ought not to neglect savoring the quality of these final discourses, of which none

is more famous than that contained in this chapter. Then, as to actual content, this chapter makes very explicit the uniqueness and the exclusiveness of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Finally, it points to an event lying beyond even resurrection itself—the coming of the Holy Spirit who will instruct the disciples in all things. This last is the event we have not yet taken any account of; and yet it is what ensures the continuance of the mission of Jesus Christ and men's witness to his name.

Revelation

The single word "revelation," used in a Christian sense, expresses a great deal more than many of us imagine. Jesus says what it means in his answer to



Thomas: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him" (*ch. 14: 6-7*). He says it again in his reply to Philip. Philip wants only to be shown the Father, that he may be satisfied. In the succeeding verses, *vs. 9-11,* Jesus declares in the plainest language that to know him is to know the Father and, indeed, that he and his Father are *in* each other.

These clear-cut statements are very far from the vague notion that the revelation of God comes to us in a multiplicity of ways. "No one comes to the Father, but by me." Not by appreciation of nature, not by literature, music, or art, not by love and friendship, not by the admiration of noble characters—only by Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he who knows Jesus likewise knows the Father. He need look no farther for God in what seems to be man's unending quest for the knowledge of God.

It is curious that we who have been shown God in Jesus Christ are somehow still anxious to find God in other ways. Can we not be content with the Christian revelation given us through the apostolic witness to our Lord Jesus Christ? Why must we always be intent on beginning over again in what we think of as our search for God? Is it not enough that God has taken the initiative and revealed himself to us fully, uniquely, in the person of his Son? Why should we be so eager to set this aside and look for "revelation" of God elsewhere?

It is understandable that Thomas and Philip might be confused. That God should become incarnate in the person of a man was not only an unheard-of thing but was something not contemplated. Thomas and Philip, along with all their contemporaries, would naturally be looking for signs of divine splendor, marks of being not like men, something, perhaps, along the lines of the pictures of the Messiah common to their time. Moreover, it was certainly both unheard of and unthought of, except in the depths of the most profound Old Testament prophecy, that God would reveal his power in weakness—that, as Jesus had been insisting all along, the hour of divine glory would be identical with the hour of human suffering he was destined to endure.

We, on the other hand, have been living on the basis of approximately two thousand years of Christian tradition, wherein the incarnation of God in the man Jesus of Nazareth has been an article of faith among all orthodox churches. With all this heritage of faith behind us and having been brought up in such a tradition of belief, it seems strange that we are confused about the uniqueness of God's revelation in Christ and are hesitant about accepting it. Perhaps the fact of the matter is that no length of tradition can ever persuade us—natural men that we are—of the reality of God having manifested himself perfectly and fully in a human being. We can readily accept the belief that Jesus was peculiarly inspired, that he was the best and noblest of men, but we draw back before the assertion that he was what he said he was—the I AM of the Old Testament. God, who knows the secrets of men's hearts, perceives the difficulty of believing what is, on the face of it, so implausible. This, too, we must bring to him for forgiveness—that we should prefer to keep on looking for God in the glory of the sunset and the splendor of human art, rather than come to terms with the once-and-for-all self-unveiling that God provided when Jesus was on earth.

Yet what a comfort it is to realize that, regardless of our faith and unbelief, Jesus Christ remains what he said he was. What a comfort and opportunity it is to have this *definite* word to believe and to speak concerning the knowledge of God! Jesus goes on from his reply to the questions of Thomas and Philip to declare, "He who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do because I go to the Father" (*v. 12*). Here he undoubtedly has in mind the evangelical work to be done by the church in spreading the gospel of faith in himself throughout all nations. He confined himself to his people Israel. He lived and moved and worked within only a very small segment of the earth. But by virtue of his death and resurrection, there is now the possibility of taking the knowledge of God in Christ to the ends of the world. When faith is fixed clearly

upon Jesus Christ as the incarnation and revelation of God Almighty, possibilities open up that Jesus himself refrained from exploiting. On the other hand, our indefiniteness, our backing away from this once-and-for-all revelation, makes of Christianity so vague a thing that we know not how to commend it to anyone. How can we be evangelists for Christ when we welcome almost any revelation, or alleged revelation, except Jesus' claims about himself? How can we be true evangelists when we are so glad to let men continue their unending search for the God who has already come among us?

The Coming of the Counselor

It is the way of the world to desire almost any knowledge of God except that unique revelation given in Jesus Christ. The infant church, in going forth to witness to Christ, needed to have God at its side, and so does the church today, despite its temporal (and perhaps temporary!) successes. Therefore, Jesus says that God "will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him" (*vs. 16-17*). Farther along in the chapter, at *v. 26*, we are told that "the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

Many readers will recall that in the King James Version of the Bible the word is not "Counselor" but "Comforter." It happens that the Greek word used here is difficult to translate and, in fact, difficult to understand exactly. Some have recommended that it be translated "Advocate," but this seems undesirable because of the idea of a kind of legal service to be rendered. Whatever the English translation might best be, the main point is that *there is another One* who will be with the church when Jesus is no longer upon the earth. The church will not be dependent upon its own wisdom, upon its recollection of what Jesus did or taught, and certainly not upon the plausibility of its teachings. It is significant that Jesus emphasizes the point that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth. To have the Holy Spirit fighting, so to speak, alongside the church and in its behalf is a kind of barrier between the church and the world with its earthly wisdom. Yet it is this same Holy Spirit who will not only sustain the church but will make possible the church's evangelical work of proclaiming the gospel far and wide and evoking faith. The church will not be one more human institution, advocating its particular doctrines or philosophy or policy, but will, rather, be the means by which the unique revelation of God in Christ, as witnessed by the apostles, will be carried to the hearts and minds of men.

It should be further noted that Jesus does not think of the Holy Spirit as representing a mere recollection of himself or of his words. The Holy Spirit will be *God in action,* working in and for the church—or better, actually making the church possible. The Spirit will indeed "bring to your remembrance" the things that Jesus has said, as we are told in *v. 26*. But also, as a Person of the Godhead, he will aggressively carry forward the mission of Christ and open up new vistas of understanding to those who so imperfectly understood Jesus in his earthly day.

As we know from the first chapter of The Acts, the disciples were helpless to go forward with the mission entrusted to them until the Holy Spirit descended upon them. They prayed, they talked among themselves, but they could not act. They did not know which way to turn, and the remembrance of what Jesus had said availed little, until God struck at Pentecost in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

To this day, the church, for its *real* (not its worldly) successes, depends upon the action of God. The church does not have the momentum to carry itself forward; it must ever be thrust forward by God himself.

Pentecost is the great event for which the early church had to wait, after resurrection. The eventfulness of church life today depends upon the activity of God and not upon what can be planned, organized, or even foreseen.

Faced with the prospect and responsibility of announcing to the world the revelation of God in Christ the church might well be dismayed. Nevertheless, the promise remains of the gift of the Counselor, the Holy Spirit. There remains also the benediction of Christ: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (*v. 27*).

"Not as the world gives . . . ." The peace that Jesus

leaves is the peace that is found in struggle, in persecution, in suffering. The servant is not above his master. The hour of glory for the church is ever the hour of suffering, but precisely in that suffering the church discovers that the yoke, after all, is easy and the burden lighter than one would have thought. The ruler of this world, who had no power over Jesus (*vs. 30-31*), similarly has no power over the church. He has no power over the church, that is to say, so long as the church looks for glory only in its tribulations. Therein lies its peace, its faith, its comfort, and its power.

Unit II—Was Jesus a Teacher?

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1

THE ROLE OF JESUS AS TEACHER

Read *Mark 1: 1-28; Matt. 13: 10-16.*

In his book, *The Bible Speaks to You,* Robert McAfee Brown begins one chapter with this rather unusual edict: "Be It Hereby Enacted: that every three years all people shall forget whatever they have learned about Jesus, and begin the study all over again." The purpose of this edict is not to make us more poorly acquainted with Jesus than we already are, but to make us better able to see him as he really was (or is), by first freeing us from many false notions about him.

Because our ancestors for nineteen hundred years have confessed Jesus to be Lord, we today find it difficult to see him as the first-century Palestinians saw him. We have our own ideas about what a "Lord" should be, and we often apply these ideas to Jesus without bothering to see if they really are applicable. Consequently, we often fail to notice the strange character of this unusual Lord.

We also have our own ideas of what a teacher should be; therefore, when we hear that Jesus was a teacher, we quickly and uncritically associate him with our "theories of education." But such a procedure almost guarantees our misunderstanding of both the teacher and his teachings. Because nineteen hundred years of Christianity have bequeathed to us an idealized picture of Jesus, we find it difficult to believe that anyone could have wanted to crucify him. Yet, if we do not come to understand that some very respectable people demanded his death, we shall certainly fail to grasp what it means to call him our Lord. Our distance from Jesus lends enchantment, making many of the details of his Messiahship fuzzy to us. Perhaps the best way, then, to clear up the fuzziness many of us have is to forget (so far as it is possible) at least for a while the years between him and us and to look anew at him in the record of those who were his contemporaries.

Nothing Easy Here

In this series of articles, our purpose is to understand Jesus as a teacher—as the early Christians understood him to be a teacher. To do this will require us to discard and forget many ideas that we have picked up about Jesus in this field. In the past few centuries it has become increasingly popular to think of Jesus primarily as a great teacher. Many non-Christians, who have denied Jesus to be the only-begotten Son of the Father, have nevertheless found his "teachings" to be attractive and so have claimed to be followers of the "teachings of Jesus." This idea is contagious, and many Christians today who are somewhat baffled by the theology of Paul prefer to think of "the Jesus of the Gospels" as their teacher and they rejoice that his teachings are simple, easily understood, and easily followed. Unfortunately (or fortunately?), many of the ideas we have of Jesus as teacher find no support in the Gospel material or else rest on a misinterpretation of this material.

We should consider first, then, several of the popular ideas about Jesus as a teacher that do not stand up under the test of the Scripture. One of the more popular ideas says that the teachings of Jesus are easily understood. But the New Testament records an almost continual *mis*understanding of Jesus. The earliest words of Jesus to be recorded in the Gospels are those which were spoken by him in the Temple when he was twelve years old: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Then the next verse adds, "And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them." (*Luke 2: 49-50.*) In the early part of his ministry Jesus preached in his home town of Nazareth. His neighbors were astonished at what they heard and took offense at him; they intended to kill him by throwing him headlong off a hill, but he escaped. This is hardly the kind of conduct which would arise from a right understanding of his teachings. And it would appear that Jesus himself did not expect to be understood by the multitudes; for he is recorded as often ending a lesson with the words, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (See *Matt. 11: 15; Luke 8: 8.*)

Apparently the "ears to hear" were given to only a chosen few. He said to his disciples, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they

may not see, and hearing they may not understand." (*Luke 8: 10.*) But even the disciples—those who were closest to him—seldom understood. When Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied" (*John 14: 8*), he had completely misunderstood, as Jesus' reply indicated: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father" (*v. 9*). Even Peter misunderstood. When Jesus told the disciples of his coming suffering and death, Peter "took him, and began to rebuke him." But Jesus answered him: "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men." (*Mark 8: 31-33.*) Again, at the Last Supper when Jesus insisted upon washing the disciples' feet, Peter (at first) could not understand. The disciples argued over their own positions in the Kingdom of God in a way that indicated they had not understood Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom. After the transfiguration, Jesus began to teach the disciples about his coming suffering and death; but obviously they had not understood, for the crucifixion took them by surprise and left them dejected and despondent—men without hope.

It is no simple task for us to understand either. If we are honest with the material, we must admit that we do not easily understand why God's Messiah had to die, or why the poor are blessed in the Kingdom of God, or why we should love our enemies, or why the tax collectors and harlots enter the Kingdom of God before the righteous Pharisees.

The Biblical testimony contradicts the popular idea about Jesus' simple teachings. The teachings of Jesus are not easily understood, and this further word should be added: When men did come to understand Jesus (and some did), they did so not because they had superior intelligence and thus were able to fathom the depths of Jesus' thought; they did so because God gave them ears to hear.

Who Can Follow These *Teachings?*

A second popular idea from which we should free ourselves is that the "teachings" of Jesus are easily followed. You may find it relatively easy to refrain from killing people (except in times of war, some would add), but have you ever succeeded in *not hating* anyone or even in *not being angry* with anyone? It is one thing to refrain from adultery, but it is another thing never to lust. Have you ever succeeded in loving your enemies—Hitler, or "Mr. K," for example? Or have you ever succeeded in following the "simple" Golden Rule? Have you succeeded in becoming the least among men? *In God's sight, this is the highest position you can attain.*

Again, if we are honest with the material and ourselves, we should admit that the teachings of Jesus are not easy to follow. We might even say that they are impossible to attain. It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Those men who do come to follow the teachings of Jesus do not have superior moral equipment, unusual insight or courage; they are unusually humble, however, claiming only that with God all things are possible.

A third popular idea, which has in a way contributed to the first two mentioned, is the notion that the Pharisees were, by all human standards, a pretty rotten lot of people. Because many of Jesus' teachings were directly or indirectly against the Pharisees, we might assume that they were horrible folk, obviously proud, hypocritical, deceitful, scheming, and merciless. If this view is held, it is quite easy to understand why one's righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees before he can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; it seems no wonder that Jesus preferred the company of tax-gatherers and sinners to the company of the Pharisees. But suppose that the Pharisees really weren't so horrible, by human standards, as we choose to think. Suppose that they were good, upstanding folk, as we are, concerned with community morals and standards, and anxious to keep their city a decent place in which to live. If *this* be the case, what would Jesus have meant when he said that our righteousness must exceed theirs, and why would he prefer the company of sinners to their company? Again, if we are honest, we shall have to admit that the Pharisees were a lot more like you and me than we care to admit. Their legalistic attitude is not unlike our belief that God helps those who help themselves; their dislike of the publicans (Jews who became tax collectors for the hated Romans) is not unlike our dislike of the G.I. turncoats in the Korean conflict; their desire to punish the harlots is not unlike our recent "get-tough" policy with juvenile delinquents and TV-quiz "fixers." Therefore, when we read that our righteousness must exceed theirs, the meaning is not obvious or easy to understand. Jesus' words call for a strange new kind of righteousness, not a righteousness like ours.

More than a Math Teacher

Now, perhaps, we are able to examine a fourth and final "wrong idea"—the idea that Jesus' role as a teacher is essentially like that of any other teacher, that our relation to him as his "pupil" is like our role as a pupil to any other teacher, and that his teachings are essentially like any other teachings in their form, if not in their content. It is frequently thought that Jesus is pretty much like a math teacher, except that his subject matter is "moral or spiritual values" instead of math. But an examination of the New Testament will reveal that the first Christians did not think of him in this way. For them (yes, even for the Gospel writers) Jesus is primarily God's Messiah (NOTE: Messiah = Christ = anointed), whose function is to usher in or establish *God's Kingdom.* Every New Testament writer claims that Jesus is the Christ. And "Christ" is not just Jesus' last name. It is an office that gets its meaning from the Old Testament hope of the coming of God's perfect reign. Notice Matthew's extreme concern to connect Jesus with Old Testament Messianic passages, and Luke's concern, in the birth narratives, to proclaim Jesus as the consolation of Israel. Jesus' first recorded preaching, in *Mark 1:14-15,* is the startling announcement that the Kingdom of God is now present: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." This is his constant theme: all else that he says and does—his teachings—must be understood as a development of this theme.

We cannot adequately deal with the role of Jesus as the Messiah unless we first deal with the Old Testament expectation of the Messiah and the Old Testament understanding of God's Kingdom. To try to do otherwise is to cut Jesus off from his roots. The New Testament writers assume that their readers know the Old Testament. Furthermore, this should suggest that Jesus' role as a teacher must be dealt with *within* the framework of his role as the Messiah of God's Kingdom—not independently or in the framework of any modern educational theory.

Taking a Backward Look Ahead

Therefore, in these articles we shall be following what may seem to be a strange procedure. We shall be spending a good bit of time on the Old Testament material in order to try to come to an understanding of the teachings of Jesus! Remember that Jesus said, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets [the term "the law and the prophets" means the Old Testament]; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them." (*Matt. 5: 17.*) We can hardly claim to have dealt adequately with Jesus and his mission, then, until we have made a serious study of the Law and the Prophets, which he explicitly stated it was his purpose to fulfill.

We all find that it is the function of the Messiah to establish the Kingdom, not simply to instruct people *about* it. Therefore, we shall find that the teachings of Jesus, when heard about by people with ears to hear, do not so much *instruct* them *about* the Kingdom as *establish* them in it. Jesus' words are *words with power,* which do not so much demand something from us as *re-create* us or cause us to be born anew into God's Kingdom. Jesus teaches, not as the scribes (that is, as ordinary teachers), but as one with authority. His word is the very creative word of God, which accomplishes its purpose. When he speaks, the demons obey, the blind see, the lame walk. When he speaks, and when men are given ears to hear by the Holy Spirit, then men obey. When he says, for example, "You are the salt of the earth," this is not a *demand,* which we had better obey if we know what is good for us. It is, rather, a creative command that, when truly heard by his people, truly *makes* them the salt of the earth. (The disciples became the salt of the earth.) The function of the Messiah is not to persuade men by moral instruction to live better lives, but to *make* them *new* men fit for the Kingdom. (See the Nicodemus story, *John 3: 1-15.*)

Jesus' ethical teachings, then, are not demands for moral excellence, with a promise of the reward of God's Kingdom tacked on. They rather *announce* the *gift* of the Kingdom and are uttered with the power to make men new. In the mouth of any other man, Jesus' teachings would be mere moralistic demands (do this and you will receive a reward), for "any other man" is not God's Messiah. But in the mouth of Jesus, they are the very words of life, for he *is* God's Messiah, through whom all things are made new. When any other man says to you, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," this is an impossible moralistic demand, for he does not have the power to make you perfect, nor do you have the power to obey. But when Jesus says to you, "You . . . must be perfect . . . ," this is the good news of God's Kingdom, for Jesus is God's Messiah, who can give you "ears to hear," who can *make* you "perfect."

Therefore, as a final warning, let us be on our guard in this series against separating the teachings of Jesus from Jesus the Messiah. Apart from him the teachings are not the same. We are often reminded that other men have taught the same things as Jesus taught. This should not disturb us or make us think that Jesus has lost his uniqueness. His uniqueness does not lie in his *teachings,* but in the fact that he is the Messiah, who teaches with power to make you what he calls you to be.

2

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Read *Gen., chs. 2; 3; Micah 4: 1-7.*

In the last article it was noted that the teaching role of Jesus should be viewed within the context of his mission as the Messiah of God's Kingdom. Since the concepts of both the Kingdom and the Messiah arise in the Old Testament, today we are to devote our attention to the Old Testament background.

Kingdom of God

In the Bible, and especially in the Old Testament, God is the Lord of history, who directs the destiny not only of Israel but of all nations—Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Persia, etc.—to *his* appointed goal. *God's Kingdom* is the goal (the end) of their history; this Kingdom will be characterized by God's perfect reign and by man's (the nations') perfect obedience to God, which is the proper worship of him. Several important things are emphasized in the Biblical description of God's Kingdom or reign:

1. God, as the Lord of history, reigns by his own will and initiative.
2. The aim of the Kingdom of God is the praise of God.
3. God is praised by the perfect obedience of man in community.
4. Man's salvation consists in being in this Kingdom or community, that is, in living a life of perfect obedience to God.

The Fall

The Old Testament sees all men as sinners—in rebellion against God's reign or God's Kingdom. This rebellion is declared in the story of Adam and Eve—man and woman—who reject God's purpose or goal for their lives. They are created by God to obey him and to receive the good gifts of the garden from him with thanksgiving. They are to be content with their creatureliness, willing to accept from their Creator his decision as to what is good and what is evil. In accepting their creatureliness from God, they are to accept each other (as husband and wife) and to live their life together to the praise of their Maker. But Adam and Eve are *not* content with their humanity. They want to be equal to God, deciding for themselves what is good and what is evil. They are not content to be creatures whose destiny is obedience to God, so they rebel against God, declaring themselves, in effect, to be the "gods" of their life.

What immediately happens when Adam and Eve become their own gods? They find that when they claim to be *gods*, they can no longer live together as two *creatures* should. Having estranged themselves from God, they find that they are estranged from each other, and so they have to hide from each other with fig leaves; the genuine community between them is broken. So long as they acknowledge God as their Lord and themselves as his creatures, they have no false pride to prevent them from living together in perfect innocence to the praise of their Maker. But when they reject God, they become *proud,* and two proud people cannot live together as children of God. Their innocence is gone, and they have to put on "airs" (in this case, fig leaves) to maintain the illusion of their pride.

The succeeding stories in *Gen., chs. 4 to 11,* show the same thing—what happens to man when he rejects his true God and tries to be his own god. The result of this rebellion (sin) is the disintegration of the community of God's creatures. Cain kills his brother Abel instead of protecting, and thus *loving,* his brother. Finally, God scatters the people of the world into various language groups, because they try to take heaven by storm by building the Tower of Babel (*ch. 11*). Just as the fig leaves separated proud Adam from proud Eve, so now different languages separate proud peoples from proud peoples. Because men refused to acknowledge God as their Creator and Lord, they are unable to acknowledge one another as fellow creatures whose destiny is to live in community to the praise of the Creator.

According to the Bible, this is not just the story of Adam and Eve and a few others "way back then." This is our story. *We all* have rejected God as the Lord of our lives and so have rejected one another as those given to us by God to love. *We all* try to play God (we make God in *our own* image); and all our actions toward our neighbors are done "from behind fig leaves" (we are always careful, in dealing with our neighbors, not to lose our false pride). But although man is unfaithful, God is faithful to his purpose.

The Restoration

The remainder of the Bible—Old and New Testaments—is a record of what God is doing to *restore* man to the purpose for which he was created—that is, it is a record of what God is doing toward the re-establishment of his Kingdom. This restoration is something God does on his own initiative; it is hardly anything man could be expected to do on his own initiative, *since the Kingdom is precisely what man is rebelling against.* God's first major step is to call (elect) the Israelites to be the first re-establishment of this community. The promise that was made to Abra-

ham is finally enacted in a *covenant* with the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai shortly after the exodus from Egypt. This covenant, which is initiated by God, the Lord of history, calls Israel into a *community* whose corporate life is to be one of obedience to God and, thereby, one that redounds to the glory of God. The covenant restores rebellious man to his position as creature under God and, in turn, reconciles him with his neighbor from whom he had been estranged.

This covenant is expressed in the Ten Commandments of *Ex., ch. 20.* The first four commandments pertain to man's relationship to God:

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."
2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."
3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."
4. "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy."

In his gracious covenant, God declares his Kingship over his people—the Kingship that man had rejected in favor of making himself his own lord.

The last six commandments pertain to man's relationship to his fellow creatures:

5. "Honor thy father and thy mother."
6. "Thou shalt not kill."
7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."
8. "Thou shalt not steal."
9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness."
10. "Thou shalt not covet."

In the gracious covenant, these last six commandments restore man to his neighbor in a new community, the community that had been destroyed when man, by rejecting God, became his own lord.

Israel, then, was called from rebellion into obedience, but this call was not intended to make Israel think of itself as a "privileged nation." Israel, instead, was to be the nucleus of the Kingdom of God, to which all other nations (the Gentiles) would be joined in the ultimate restoration; she was to be a nation of priests, through whom all nations would be blessed.

It is important to notice that the Kingdom of God is not something that is given to man as a *reward* for his obedience to the laws of the covenant. The Kingdom is, rather, *obedience* itself. We often make the mistake of thinking that God's reign, salvation, heaven, or the future life, is a realm in which we shall be abundantly blessed with the things *we* want, as a reward for doing in this life a number of things God commands but which we do not particularly want to do. For example, we do not particularly want to do good to everybody or to live sacrificial lives, but we do these things (after a fashion) because we feel that we have to do them *to get into* God's Kingdom—to go to heaven. But God's covenant is not this sort of trade. God's Kingdom is precisely the realm *in which* man does good to everyone else, in which he lives a self-sacrificial life. The covenant does not promise a blessing *in return for* obedience; it promises the blessing *of* a perfect restoration to God's reign.

Covenant Requirements

This covenant requires us to think about God's laws in a way radically different from that to which we are accustomed. The laws are not dictatorial demands from an impersonal, vindictive, tyrannical, merciless God, who knows only cold, calculating justice. Instead, they are *creative* commands of a gracious God, who, in his unfathomable mercy, has decided to restore man to his Kingdom, even though man has rebelled against him and so deserves death. God effects this restoration (the establishment of his Kingdom) not because man deserves, earns, or merits it, and not because man wants it, but because *God genuinely loves his creatures and wants them to be what he intended them to be.*

The Israelites, then, were redeemed from their slavery and re-created into a community of God's people. Throughout their subsequent history they had a number of leaders under whom they moved toward the fulfillment of God's purpose for them: the blessing of all nations and the perfection of God's Kingdom. Under Moses' leadership they were transformed from a motley band of slaves in Egypt to a community in the desert. Under Joshua they gained a land of their own, the Promised Land of Canaan. And then under David they became a kingdom—not a very great one by worldly standards—but nevertheless a kingdom. But, after David, the Israelites suffered a number of setbacks. Solomon's wisdom was overshadowed by his imprudence, so that upon his death the nation divided into two kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. After a stormy history, spotted by some periods of material wealth and spiritual poverty, Israel fell to the Assyrians in 721 B.C. Judah, the less illustrious half, managed to hold on about 150 more years; but finally it too fell to the invader, which this time was Babylonia (587 B.C.).

GUERNI
By Pablo Pica

Slaughter is no longer just for soldiers on battlefields; it came to t women and children of Guernica, Spa

And Yet Another Restoration

But the Israelites, through it all, still looked forward to the fulfillment of their destiny. They saw their national disasters, not as signs of the withdrawal of God's promise, but as purifying acts by God to make them better fit for their destiny. To be sure,

ney did not always agree precisely about the nature or ıode of accomplishment of this destiny. Even before ıe fall of Judah, the prophet Micah spoke in positive rms of the fulfillment as the establishment of God's ouse on Zion, with all nations coming there to wor-ıip; then nations would be at peace, and all would ɔey God. (Read *Micah 4: 1-5;* see *Isa. 2: 2-4.*) eremiah thought in terms of a new covenant "writ-n upon the heart." (*Ch. 31: 31-34.*) (The Kingdom ould be where the Ten Commandments are truly ɔeyed.) Isaiah envisioned a Suffering Servant of srael, who would "heal" the nations of the world by ıking upon himself the punishment they deserved. *Isa., ch. 53.*)

Ezekiel, during the time of the Babylonian cap-vity, thought of the fulfillment of Israel's destiny in rms of their dry bones being resurrected and of the ew Israel being ruled over by a new David under n everlasting covenant. (*Ch. 37.*) This hope for a ew King David became especially popular. As the sraelites looked back on their history, they saw Da-id as their greatest king. They idealized him, in

Greek translation of the Hebrew word for Messiah, which means anointed—that is, the anointed king of Israel. Therefore, Jesus Christ means Jesus the Messiah or Jesus the King. Mark, in the opening verse of his Gospel, immediately claims Jesus of Nazareth to be the hoped-for Messiah by calling him Jesus *Christ:* "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Luke is no less anxious to make the same identification. Note his account of the annunciation to Mary:

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.
He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High;
and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,
and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever;
and of his kingdom there will be no end."
(*Luke 1: 31-33;* cf. *vs. 67-79.*)

Matthew, in the very first verse of his Gospel, de-

uch the same way that we idealize George Washing-ɔn, and looked forward to the time when God would noint for them a new David, who would be to all ıtions what David had been to Israel. At that time od's Kingdom would be established and the new avid would reign over it forever. He would lead *all* ıe nations in the ways of God, just as David had led srael in the ways of God. But to be led in the ways f God does not mean simply to be *instructed* in some ıles; it means to be remade into human beings who ccept God's reign over their lives rather than rebel gainst it.

Words for Establishing God's Kingdom

The New Testament writers proclaim Jesus to be ıis hoped-for new David. The word "Christ" is the

clares Jesus to be the Messiah: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." In the Gospel of John, *ch. 1: 41,* Andrew announces to his brother, Simon Peter, " 'We have found the Messiah' (which means Christ)." In *v. 49,* Nathaniel cries out, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Since the four Gospel writers (who record the teachings of Jesus) think of him as the new David, it is inconceivable that they should think of the teachings of the Messiah as anything other than the words that bring in or establish God's Kingdom. Just as the Ten Commandments called the Israelites back to the reign of God, back into the Kingdom of God, so the teachings of Jesus the Christ call men of all nations back to this same Kingdom.

MAN IN THE KINGDOM

Read *Mark 10: 35-45.*

IN THE last article we studied the Old Testament hope and expectation for the Kingdom of God in order to get a background for understanding the role of Jesus as the Messiah of this Kingdom. We now turn our attention to man in the Kingdom, hoping that in so doing we shall get a better understanding of what man is and of why Jesus did and taught what he did.

Some Common Ideas About Who We Are

Because we are all human beings (of a sort), we seldom stop to think seriously or profoundly about what we really are—what the *definition* of us really is. Scientists and philosophers have variously made their definitions: man is the rational animal—*homo sapiens,* or man is the animal with a soul, or man is the animal who shapes his environment, or man is the spark of the divine, etc. But most of us, who are laymen in respect to science and philosophy, usually do not think in terms like these, for they are far too sophisticated. We all, of course, do have our own hopes, dreams, ambitions, and ideals, and we tend to think of our "real" selves in terms of these hopes, dreams, ambitions, and ideals. If I am a teacher, I don't think of the *real* me as a poor, underpaid instructor, teaching dull students (with dull lectures) in some remote, insignificant place; rather, I think of the real me as a well-paid *professor,* enthralling avid young scholars with brilliant lectures in a great university. If you are a salesman, you think of the *real* you, not as the pavement-pounding peddler that you are, but as the sales manager with the worldly look, humbling the president and board chairman by your brilliant sales strategy. Or if you are a housewife, you probably don't think that the real you is the diaper-washing, stove-tending, dust-chasing, taxi-driving slave that you are; the *real* you is the lady of the manor, now gaily playing with the children in the nursery, now supervising your faithful kitchen staff, now graciously entertaining your genteel friends, now off on some errand of mercy for a less-fortunate woman in need. Stop for a moment and think about the *real* you. What do you think you really are? What do you think your real *image* is?

The point is that the "real us" constitutes our definition of humanity. Most of us, then, tend to think of our "salvation" or of "heaven" or of the Kingdom of God precisely in terms of this definition—as the place where the "real" me is realized and appreciated. We tend to think of God as the One who can put us in this glorious state; we become "religious" in order that the God who *can* do it *will* do it for us. In the Bible this "religiousness" is called idolatry: the god who is worshiped in order to get from him what we want for ourselves is an idol, a god made in man's image, a god whom man can manipulate.

We Are Creatures

Because we do have our own ideas about the real us and because our "religion" is the way of guaranteeing the achievement of the real us, it comes as a shock to read the Bible and find there what we really are. In fact, it is so shocking that men rebel against it. Israel repeatedly turned to foreign gods (the *baalim*) to keep from hearing it. And those who heard it from Jesus crucified him rather than admit that it was true. What, then, is this shocking disclosure of what we really are?

We are creatures! This hardly seems to be a shocking revelation, and yet it is if we really take it seriously; for to admit that we *are* creatures obliges us to *act* like creatures, when we really prefer to act like creators. Let's see what the Bible says about our creatureliness. The creation stories in *Gen., chs. 1* and *2,* are emphatic assertions that God the Creator, on the one hand, and the Creation, on the other, are two different things, and that God is the *Lord* of his creation. Furthermore, there is the positive assertion that *man* is a part of creation, not a part of God. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created him; male and female he created them." (*Gen. 1: 27.*) Whatever the image of God may be, it is what man is *created* in and *not* some *uncreated,* eternal part of man. *Genesis 2: 7* stresses even more emphatically man's *created* status: "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." Because we are a part of creation, our proper relationship to God is not based on any essential kinship between us and God—not on any "spark of divinity" or "divine substance" within us. Because we are creatures, our proper relationship to God is that of obedience to our Creator. Such obedience is called "good," and it is as creatures that we achieve it. Notice throughout *Gen., ch. 1,* the assertion that the Creation is good.

In this connection it will be helpful to contrast the Biblical view of man as creature with a popular but non-Biblical view. This other view (generally called "Greek") sees the Creation as the evil principle in the universe. Man is thought to be made of two parts, the *essential* part being an uncreated, eternal, pure mind or soul, and the nonessential part being the created

emporal, inherently evil body in which the soul is "trapped" for a time. In this view man's relationship to God is not that of creature to creator, but that of eternal to eternal. This relationship is not achieved by man *as* creature, but by man as an eternal, divine soul who rids himself of his created body.

But not so in the Bible. There man *as creature* is related to God as creature to Creator. Man's entire life is the life of the creature: his birth, his youth, his old age, his death, yes, even his resurrection and his salvation.

It will be helpful to notice how man's creatureliness is maintained and stressed throughout the Bible. The record of the reign of King David found in II Samuel leaves no doubt but that we are dealing with flesh and blood, not with a divine spark. In The Book of Job, Job challenges God *until* he comes to realize that God is God and man is man. Then his mouth is stopped. When the psalmist (*Ps. 8*) considers the heavens, he is amazed that God would be mindful of man, who is so insignificant by comparison. Isaiah finds the flesh of man no more permanent than the grass:

"All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people is grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever."
(*Isa. 40: 6-8.*)

We Are Called to Be Obedient

The real shock at learning that we are creatures comes when we realize what we are supposed to do as creatures: obey the Creator. Man is apparently unique among the created beings in that he was created to *know* God (cf. Adam and Eve) and in knowing him to obey him. A human being, by Biblical definition, is an obedient creature; he is authentically a human being as he is obedient to his Creator. You can read many philosophy books and also (sad to say) many theology books without finding that obedience is an essential characteristic of humanity. Yet you cannot read the Bible without finding it.

Perhaps Protestant writers are reluctant to stress man's role as an obedient creature because that would seem to conflict with the belief in justification by grace apart from works. But the conflict does not really exist. In a doctrine of justification by works, obedience is seen as a *means* of attaining some other condition as the end; i.e., obey and get a reward. In such a case, obedience is not really an essential characteristic of humanity, but something that is useful for a while in attaining a desired goal. But in Biblical thought, obedience is precisely the state *to* which man is restored by God's grace. The *obedience* of man in God's Kingdom is the *goal* of God's justifying act. The obedience of the true man is not a means to some "salvation"; the obedience is salvation itself.

Here it should be stressed that the Bible is a record of what God is doing to save men, to give them authentic humanity, to make them obedient creatures again. In the Old Testament, God saved the Israelites out of Egypt and gave them the law so that they could be his genuine nation. But this nation was to be a nation of priests through whose obedience all nations would be brought into God's Kingdom. In the New Testament, Jesus is seen as the Christ of Israel, through whom the ultimate obedience of all nations will be brought about (see *Rom. 1: 5*). The writer of Ephesians stresses that obedience—the doing of good works—is the goal *to which* we are saved by God's grace:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (*Eph. 2: 8-10.*)

It should be clear, then, that authentic man, by Biblical definition, is an obedient creature. He is not saved *by* good works, but saved *for* them. But these good works to which or for which we are saved are not just "kind deeds" we can perform without a radical change in ourselves. What, then, is the radical transformation that enables us to do good works? It is the transformation that makes us *servants*.

We Are Servants

If it is shocking to learn that we are creatures who are required by our very creatureliness to be obedient, it is even more shocking to learn precisely what it is that obedience requires us to do. In a word, obedience requires us to become *servants* of all. The real human being is one who recognizes that he is his brother's keeper and not his brother's lord (cf. Cain, who re-

fused to be Abel's keeper and instead tried to play "lord" over him). Because God is Lord of all men, no man can really be the lord of another. All are servants of the Lord, and fellow servants in his Kingdom. When, on one occasion, two of the disciples of Jesus, James and John, asked to have seats of honor in his Kingdom—one on the right hand and the other on the left—they received a strange and even shocking answer from Jesus:

"You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (*Mark 10: 42-45.*)

Servitude is not seen by Jesus as a temporary duty that man must perform *before* he becomes great. Servitude is *itself* true greatness in God's Kingdom. The one who is the slave of all *is* the true man. The one who lords it over the others—the Gentiles—thinks he is a great man; but in God's sight he has lost his humanity. Small wonder that men crucified Jesus! The good news that we want to hear from God is hardly the announcement that we have been created to become slaves of all—that servitude is our true destiny. It sounds more like bad news.

Man in the Kingdom

God is at work to bring about his Kingdom, his perfect rule. In God's Kingdom, man is restored to his humanity. This Kingdom is the *community* of God's creatures, who, acknowledging God as their Lord, glorify him in their community life of obedience. When man is restored to God's Kingdom, he is at the same time (or better, in the *very act*), restored to his fellow man as his keeper or servant. In Biblical thought, there is no such thing as a true man apart from the community; there is no isolated individual who can "commune with God alone." When a man is "right with God," he must be what God created him to be. But since God created us to be obedient servants, to be right with God is to be "right" with our neighbor.

Think again about the "real" you and the kind of heaven that it implies. How does your definition of yourself compare with the Biblical definition of what you are and what, by God's grace, you shall be? Do we not think of the Kingdom of God, or of Heaven, as the place where we get a reward—where we become the "real" selves we think we are? But in Biblical thought the Kingdom is the rule of God, where we become what he created and predestined us to be: obedient creatures, who love the Lord our God with all our hearts and minds and souls and strength, and who love our neighbors as ourselves. This is precisely what Jesus . . . TAUGHT.

UNIT II — 4

JESUS, THE ONE TRUE MAN

In the previous three articles we have made these assertions: (1) Man was created by God to be one whose "humanity" is fulfilled in serving God and his neighbor. (2) It is God's goal to restore man to his true humanity; this restoration of man is the establishment of God's reign, or the Kingdom of God. (3) The Kingdom is to be established through the work of the Messiah of Israel. Now, since the New Testament declares Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ (the Messiah), the aim of this article will be to come to a better understanding of the way in which Jesus does establish the Kingdom of God by restoring humanity to man.

Read *Phil. 2: 1-11.*

As a *human being,* Jesus is the Messiah of God's Kingdom. The New Testament writers go to great length to stress that Jesus was fully man. Paul, in *Phil. 2: 1-11,* reminds his correspondents that although Christ Jesus "was in the form of God," he "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." When Matthew and Luke write of the birth of the Messiah, the real miracle seems to be not that he had no human father, but that he was born of a human mother—that God's only Son really became a man! In the early days of the church, there were some people who taught that Jesus only seemed to be a man, but really was not. But the church condemned this teaching (called Docetism) as a heresy. The Gospel of John, in opposition to this Docetic heresy, proclaims boldly that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (*ch. 1: 14*). For the writer of Hebrews, it is Jesus' likeness to ourselves—his humanity—that enables him to be our sympathetic high priest (*ch. 4: 14-16*).

After the writing of the New Testament, the church fathers recognized the importance of Jesus' humanity. Although they confessed the Son to be one with the

her, in the doctrine of the Trinity, they never wed this confession to detract from Jesus' full nanity; he is *fully God* and *fully man*, they af- ned, not a half-and-half mixture. The Council of aea, which resisted all efforts to dilute the deity of Son, was followed by the Council of Chalcedon, ch resisted all efforts to dilute the Son's full hu- nity.

ince both the New Testament writers and the early rch fathers viewed Jesus' humanity as not just *portant*, but *crucial* to his Messianic task, let us to understand, not just *that* they considered it so, also *why* they viewed it in this way.

n short, it may be said that Jesus fulfilled his ssiahship—Jesus became the Christ—simply by ng a man, not a man in just "any old sense" and a man according to *our* definitions, but a *real, hentic, genuine* man according to God's definition nan (see Article 3). Jesus is our Savior by living for he humanity we were created to live, but which we cted. Paul contrasts the roles of Adam and Christ e *Rom. 5: 12-21; I Cor. 15: 22*):

Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads cquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's bedience many were made sinners, so by one man's dience many will be made righteous." (*Rom. 5: 19.*)

God had created Adam (man) for a particular kind ife, but Adam (man) refused it; he rebelled against Maker. So God, because he yet loved his rebellious atures, sent his own Son to become the New Adam an), who would live the particular kind of life for ch he had created man in the first place. Let us n now to the life of Jesus as recorded by the New tament writers to see how Jesus lived as the New m.

sus as the New Adam or New Man

esus is the New Adam or new man; in his life we what humanity really is. In other words, he re- ls to us not only God, but also man—ourselves. e New Testament writers stress two things about us in this regard: the *fact* of his obedience and the tent of his obedient life. Let us discuss first the of Jesus' obedience.

ust after Jesus had been baptized by John, he went the wilderness for forty days, to be tempted by an. The first temptation hurled at him was to use power as the Son of God to turn stones into bread atisfy his hunger.

But [Jesus] answered, 'It is written,
"Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."' "
(*Matt. 4: 4.*)

Here, in effect, the devil tempted Jesus the man to switch places with God, to use God to get for himself something that he wanted, to give God orders. But Jesus answered that man lives—that man has his genuine humanity—not in commanding God, but in obeying God, in heeding every word that God speaks.

When man ceases to live by God's word, he *dies* in the most serious sense of that word. Jesus the man, then, refused the very temptation to which the old Adam succumbed, the temptation to play God. Jesus "emptied himself," not holding "equality with God a thing to be grasped" (*Phil. 2: 6-7*), and accepted gladly the status of man. At the very outset of his ministry, Jesus determined that the essential characteristic of his humanity would be uncompromising obedience to the will of God.

This determination continued throughout his ministry, to the very end. The Gospel of John in particular stresses the fact that Jesus considered his task to be one of obedience to the will of God:

"My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work." (*Ch. 4: 34.*)

"I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me." (*Ch. 5: 30.*)

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me." (*Ch. 6: 38.*)

In his teaching ministry, Jesus stressed the fact that the authentic man, the man of the Kingdom, is the obedient man. Read the words of Jesus concerning the Law and the Prophets, given in *Matt. 5: 17-20*. The man who relaxes the law, said Jesus, is the least in God's Kingdom. *Matthew 7: 21* records the words of Jesus, "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (See also *Luke 6: 46-49.*) In these passages Jesus was not preaching that salvation is merited by man's doing good works; rather he was stressing the point that the man who is in God's Kingdom is precisely the man who is under God's rule. In God's Kingdom, God is God, and man is man; there is no confusion between the two.

He Lived What He Taught

The obedience of the New Adam was not an easy thing. It led to the cross. It sometimes seems to us that it would have been so easy for Jesus to avoid the cross. He could have stayed out of Jerusalem during that Passover week, or he could have condemned the publicans and sinners instead of the Pharisees. It almost seems as if Jesus had a martyr complex. But Paul reminds us in *Phil. 2: 8* that Jesus, "being found in human form . . . humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." The death on the cross was a bitter end that Jesus earnestly desired not to face. His prayer on the Mount of Olives was this: "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (*Luke 22: 42*). Obedience to God, and not a martyr complex, drove Jesus to the cross. If he had shunned the cross, if he had said to God, "Not thine, but my will be done," then he would have been the old Adam, not the New Adam; then he would have *died* in the most serious way. In his life, in his teachings, and in his death, Jesus revealed that the true man is the man obedient to the will of God.

But the question remains: "What did Jesus *do* to be obedient? What was the will of God, which he obeyed?" There is no doubt about it in the New Testament. It was God's will that he become a *servant,* and so he did. It has become such a commonplace thing to refer to Jesus as the Great Physician or the Good Shepherd that the real offense and the real glory of his actually becoming a servant are hard to get across.

But stop for a moment to think of what it means. *Jesus, by assuming the role of a servant of all, became the one true man. Therefore, to be a true man before God means to be the servant of every other man.* Notice again that it was precisely this role of servant that was rejected by the old Adam. This comes out most clearly in the account of Cain and Abel. Cain, in killing Abel, had obviously repudiated his true relationship to his brother and had, instead, tried to play "God" over him; Cain presumed to have the power of life or death over Abel. Then when God came to Cain and asked him the question that he asks of every man, "Where is . . . your brother?" Cain answered with the words that are the epitome of man's rebellion against God, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" (*Gen. 4: 9*).

But the role of our brother's keeper, which we, the sons of the old Adam, have repudiated, Jesus accepted gladly for our sakes. As if in answer to the question addressed to Cain, "Where is . . . your brother?" Jesus could say: "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. Now they know that everything that thou hast given me is from thee; for I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me. . . . While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition that the scripture might be fulfilled" (*John 17: 6-8, 12*). Jesus knew precisely "where" his brothers were for he had taken seriously his responsibility as their keeper.

Indeed, his entire ministry was one of service to others. Jesus' life of service was not just an incidental fact of his life as the Messiah of Israel, but the very center of it. He reminded his disciples that "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (*Matt. 20: 28.*) For this reason he ate with the tax collectors and the sinners and associated with the harlots—and died for them all. The Pharisees, on the other hand, who understood obedience to God in terms of remaining "pure," condemned Jesus for doing the very thing God sent him to do. When the Pharisees asked why he ate with the wrong kind of people, Jesus answered: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (*ch. 9: 12-13*).

And He Did Teach

The teachings of Jesus show the same understanding as that which his life exhibits. Once his disciples were squabbling over which ones would have the seats of honor in the Kingdom, but Jesus rebuked them with words that are unequivocal about who is greatest in God's estimation:

> "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave." (*Matt. 20: 25-27.*)

Again, it is important to notice that this is not instruction on how to attain greatness later on. Jesus is not saying, "Be a servant or slave now, and then you will be given greatness as a reward." Rather, he is stressing the fact that true greatness for a human being is precisely *in* his being the slave of others. We often make the mistake of thinking that Jesus merely taught the *way* to attain greatness in the Kingdom. But what he taught was a new understanding of what greatness is. The truly great man is the one who is just what God made him to be—the servant.

When Jesus summarized the law for the Pharisees in *Matt. 22: 37-40,* he pointed out that true obedience to God is inseparable from love of neighbor. Most of us Americans are so saturated with individualism that we look upon love of neighbor as a means of "getting right with God." We think of our relationship to God as strictly an individual one; we think that

Rose Window of the Nativity

f we are kind to others, then God will accept us. The neighbor is made an incidental tool of personal right-ousness. But really, the situation is just the other way around. When man stands before God as his authentic human creature, then, and just then, is man free to love his neighbor. His neighbor then becomes the very one with whom he lives his new humanity, and so glorifies his Maker.

Consider the parable of Jesus recorded in *Matt. 18: 23-35*. The first servant, who was forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents (roughly $10,000,000), was thereby enabled to be generous to his debtor, who owed him the comparatively trifling sum of a hundred denarii (roughly $20). But he refused to be forgiving; he, in effect, rejected his humanity. So he was delivered to the jailers until his own debt should be paid. The point for us is that in this parable Jesus does not just teach "good things to do"; rather he declares what it is to be a human being before God: one whose authentic life is realized in the service of others. This parable is told in answer to Peter's question about how many times he should forgive a brother who sinned against him. Jesus answers, in effect, that he should never stop forgiving; after all, that's what God created him for—to forgive. Jesus took this understanding seriously. On the cross he remained faithful to his humanity, praying for those who crucified him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (*Luke 23: 34*).

A number of the other teachings of Jesus are to be understood in this context. Consider his words about the law in *Matt., ch. 5:* "I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; . . . if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles,"

or "I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." These are not arbitrary laws from on high which are to be made into unbreakable "rules for daily living" that, if obeyed, will merit our salvation. Rather, they are the words of Jesus that express, in varying contexts, his unchanging conviction about who man is. And this conviction which Jesus taught, he also lived. The true man before God is the one who knows himself to be a creature of his Father, whose destiny is to be his brother's keeper, even if the brother happens to be the enemy. This is the man who is righteous, who is in the Kingdom of God. This is Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus is this obedient man, the Kingdom is present in him, and he is the first fruits of that Kingdom. Paul says that, because Jesus was the obedient servant, "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name." He is the Messiah in that through his life (i.e., the teaching he truly *lived*) the Kingdom of God has come upon us.

UNIT II — 5

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE SAVED?

How often have you heard it said, when various religions are being discussed, "Well, after all, aren't we all trying to get to the same place by different ways?" Most people visualize "salvation" in rather vague terms as a place where all our human wants and needs are taken care of. Then "religion" becomes a certain set of practices or beliefs that guarantees, or at least makes more probable, our getting there. But the Biblical faith is not a "religion" that produces this sort of "salvation." The Bible turns out to be against that kind of religion and that kind of salvation.

Read *John 3: 1-21.*

Have you ever stopped to consider seriously what salvation is? The chances are that you have not, for traditionally the church has been more concerned with the way of reaching salvation—Is it reached by good works or is it reached by faith?—than it has been with defining salvation. Perhaps if the church had been more concerned with the latter question, that is, with the definition of salvation, it might not have had so much disagreement over the first, that is, with how it is attained. We have perhaps naïvely presumed that salvation is something that everybody wants ardently; we have talked as if all religions offer the same salvation, but differ only in their understanding of the way by which it is attained. What other practical conclusion can be reached? *Works-righteousness* seems to be the only just way of attaining that goal. Let us look for a moment, then, at the religion of works-righteousness.

Legalism

"Works-righteousness" religion is the way of legalism. It says that if man wants to attain salvation, he had better be righteous in this life. Man becomes righteous by obeying certain laws thought to have been given by God, laws that are the "ground rules" for man's earthly sojourn. If he obeys these laws now, man can rest assured of salvation as a reward later on. Usually, in legalism, these laws are rather distasteful, if not downright oppressive, but the reward of salvation later is thought to be worth the immediate bother of obedience to the laws. And of course, legalism makes perfectly good sense. God, by making salvation (as a reward) contingent on man's obedience, has hit on a good way to make man do what God wants him to do. Thus, in legalism, the offer of salvation as a reward and of damnation as a punishment furnishes the basis for human obedience. Legalism looks well on paper, but it does not work in the return of human spirit.

Grace Enters the Picture—the Wrong Way

Notice carefully now what happens when legalism is denied, and this same salvation (as a reward) comes by the grace of God rather than by good works. Anarchy reigns! Now salvation, the desired goal, is given to those who do not work to earn it; it comes as a free, undeserved gift. But the basis for human conduct is gone! If God gives salvation as a free gift, how is he going to "keep us in line"? Some people suggest wildly that when a person is given this free salvation, he will be so grateful to God that he will obey him without any basis for that obedience. But someone is going to cheat, we suspect, and if he does, God will take the promised salvation away from him. But then we are back to legalism again, legalism with a layaway plan!

The situation is made worse when cross views of predestination are added to the picture. When this is done, it seems that God's grace is limited to a few persons, who will be given salvation (as a reward), and that the remaining people are consigned to hell whether they obey or not. At this point we are pretty hard put, and we resort to such explanations as these: "Man must accept God's grace, and God does not

rce that upon anyone"; or, "Man must commit his ill to God's will, and this man must do for himself." ut once more we are back to legalism, although in a ry subtle form. The whole thing is very confusing the man in the street, who is inclined to think that e legalist has the better argument. After all, doesn't make good sense that God helps those who help emselves?

NEW Salvation by Grace

The confusion arises because salvation is thought of the kind of future life man wants, but the means attaining it has been changed from works to grace. ut the fact of the matter is that the salvation given God's grace is not this sort of thing at all, but is mething startlingly different—so different that men ucified Jesus when he showed them what it was.

In the simplest terms, this much may be said about iblical salvation: Salvation is not our getting (either works *or* by grace) a goal that *we* desire; salvation instead, our being restored to what *God* desires us be, even though we do not want to be what he wants to be. Or to put it another way, to be saved is to be stored by God to our humanity, against which we ve rebelled. The Bible does not reveal just a *way* to lvation; it reveals *salvation.*

Paul, in *Rom. 8: 29,* says that God has predestined "to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order at he [the Son] might be the firstborn among many rethren." This, of all things, is what we are pre-stined to: to be like Jesus! Jesus himself is the ing image of what the "saved man" is! Anyone ho, in the Biblical sense, hopes to be saved, hopes to made into a person like Jesus. To be saved is for e old Adam (ourselves) to be made like the New dam (Jesus).

But the question is, Who wants to be like Jesus? lmost anyone would be willing to be like him for a ort while, if that were the only way to attain some-ing greater later on. But nobody wants this kind of manity forever! Remember that the men of Pales-ne tolerated Jesus for a time, thinking that sooner or ter he would show his *real* power as the Messiah of rael. But when it became apparent that he had no ea of becoming the kind of Messiah they wanted, ey got rid of him. The very idea that true man is the edient servant was more than they could stand. hey wanted no part of a Kingdom such as Jesus had offer. This is the point of the crucifixion: Men do t want to be what God wants them to be; they do t want to be saved; they do not want to enter the ingdom of God; they do not want to be God's *crea-res.* Therefore, when Jesus comes to display before em, by his life and teaching, what life in the King-m is really like, they crucify him as the son of the vil. His kind of life, they say, is not the life of a Son God; it is the life of the son of Satan.

None of us today, the sons of Adam, want to be like sus, either; this is precisely what we do not want to be. The god we will work for is the god who will promise to make us great lords in his kingdom, not the One who will make us humble servants.

Now we can see with more clarity why it is foolishness to talk about a man's *earning* or *meriting* his salvation by good works, or even by obedience. If salvation is what man is rebelling from in the first place, then it is foolish to say to him, "Be sure to obey God, and he will give you salvation." Jesus told the disciples that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom. And when the disciples responded with proper amazement, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus answered, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." (*Mark 10: 25-27.*) And it is no wonder Jesus told Nicodemus, as recorded in the third chapter of John, that unless a man is *born anew,* he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

But if it is impossible for man to save himself, it is not impossible for God, with whom all things are possible. By the Spirit of God man can be born anew. And this—joy of joys—is just what happens. The Jesus whom we crucified God raised from the dead and, by his Spirit, enables us to see him as our true Messiah. Apart from the Spirit, who presides at our new birth (*John 3: 5-6*), we see Jesus as a despicable man, who is the epitome of what we do not want to be—a humble servant. But when the Spirit witnesses to our spirit, then we see this same Jesus, this humble servant, as the one who is truly man, as the one who is truly in God's Kingdom, as the one who is the very embodiment of God's will for us. We are then able to

make the most serious confession that man can make: Jesus Christ is Lord. We who crucified him were wrong, and he was right! He, not we, really knew what human life is all about! He, and not our own vain ambition to be great, defines our *salvation!*

True Obedience Without Sanctions

Salvation is true obedience. Without the new understanding of salvation that is seen in Jesus Christ, all our obedience, no matter how "sincere" or how "gratefully rendered," is not offered in the freedom of a man who knows that his very humanity consists in his being a humble servant. Rather, it is offered as a prelude to some "salvation" that is to come later and is conditioned upon it. So long as we do not think of ourselves as the servants of God, we shall think that our obedience is in some way profitable for us; there-

fore, we shall not render it freely. But unless it is rendered freely, it is not true obedience. Consider the parable of Jesus about the unprofitable or unworthy servant (*Luke 17: 7-10*). The point of the parable is that obedience to God is not something that earns us a reward; it is our duty. When we have obeyed God, we do not deserve something in return from him; we have simply done what we, as human creatures, are supposed to have done. So, when we are *saved,* that is, when we are *restored* to the humanity God intended for us in the first place, we are simply restored to the possibility of being truly obedient. Only in Christ is it possible to be obedient without letting our left hand know what our right hand is doing—without asking, "What's in it for me?"

When salvation is seen in Jesus Christ and nowhere else, the doctrine of salvation by grace is no longer a threat to good works. Rather, it tells of the very

thing that makes it possible for good works to be really good. When good works are simply a means for earning some salvation that is to come later, these works are not really good; when good works are understood to be the very substance of salvation, it is possible for such works to be genuine acts of love. When God, by his grace, restores a man to the image of Jesus Christ, then that man is free to serve his neighbor without any thought of "what he can get out of it" for himself.

When the meaning of salvation is drawn from the life of Jesus Christ rather than from our own imaginations, it becomes possible to understand more clearly the so-called "ethical teachings" of Jesus. But if salvation is defined as that goal which man wants for himself, the ethical teachings of Jesus are an enigma, whether one thinks of that salvation as an achievement of works or as a gift of grace. Let us take just one of the teachings for an example. In *Matt. 5: 43-45,* Jesus says: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." Now if salvation is an achievement of good works, then this commandment means that anyone who expects to be saved *must* love his enemies and do good to those who persecute him—absolutely. The slightest deviation earns a one-way ticket to hell. On the other hand, if salvation is the gift of grace, then the commandment loses all its force; God promises to save man regardless of his works. (The man thus saved will *probably,* though not necessarily, lo his enemies out of gratitude for the fact that God h promised to save him.) But notice that in either ca the substance of the ethical teaching—man's relatio ship to another creature of God (who in this ca happens to be the enemy)—is essentially *unrelate* to the life of salvation. Man loves the enemy, in o case, to get something he wants from God and, in t other case, because he has been promised what wants from God. His act is simply drudgery on the o hand or incidental gratitude on the other. In neith case is it what the New Testament calls love.

But now think of salvation as the restoration to t image of Christ, by the grace of God. The comman ment to love the enemy now takes on new meaning. does not just tell us something to *do*. It tells us w Jesus *is* and who we *are*. The commandment helps to see that Jesus is the man who loved his enemies a who did good to those who persecuted him. The o true man, the New Adam, understands that he is h brother's keeper; therefore, even if the brother ha pens to be an enemy, he loves him and does good him. The commandment also helps us to know who are, because it reminds us that this is the image which we are being conformed. By the grace of G we are being restored to his Kingdom, we are bei made sons of our Father in heaven. The comman ment is not an ethical demand upon which our la salvation is contingent; it is a *description* of the salv tion to which we are being called. The saved man the one who knows himself to be a creature of G whose business it is to glorify his Maker by being Christ to his fellow man, even if that fellow man is enemy.

Salvation Not an Answer to Needs

It should be clear now that only in a limited se can salvation be spoken of as God's answer to human needs. God alone knows what our genu needs are, for he alone is our Creator. So the salvat he gives does meet our true needs. But these needs not the ones which we, the old Adam, think that have. We see our needs for all sorts of things: peace of mind, for security, for wealth, for happin and so on. When we define salvation in terms of th needs, we are guilty of idolatry; we make a god in own image, who promises to give us what we want think we need. But the salvation promised in Je Christ is not the solution to our felt needs. It is very thing we think we do not need. We don't see problem as the need to be reborn in the image of Je Christ, a humble servant, and we don't go around se ing for a God who can solve that problem for us. I that is the problem God promises to solve.

The Bible does not picture man as a creat anxiously seeking God and *his* salvation; it pictu man in flight from God because he does not w God's salvation. God does the seeking. God finds m and restores him. That is the good news.

JESUS TEACHES US THAT WE ARE SINNERS

Almost everybody claims to know what sin is, and almost everybody loves to confess sins—the sins of others. As long as we define salvation in terms of what *we* want, we define sin as those acts which tend to endanger what we want. But when Jesus teaches us anew what salvation is, he also teaches us anew what our sin is. Just as he shows a strange new world of salvation, so he shows a strange new world of sin.

Read *Matt. 9: 9-13; 12: 1-8.*

Jesus was put to death by people who considered him to be a sinner. Because the church for nearly wo thousand years has been teaching that Jesus was nless, it is difficult for us to appreciate the impression at he made upon the people of Palestine during his inistry. The Jewish leaders thought that he fla- antly and inexcusably violated the law of God. Notice me of the things he did. For one, he associated freely ith tax collectors—the publicans. In ancient Jerusam, the publicans were hated by the Jews just as, in orway during the Second World War, Quisling was ated by the Norwegians, and for just about the same ason. But Jesus had no qualms about fraternizing ith the publicans; in fact, some of them seemed to be mong his best friends. Matthew the disciple was a ublican.

Furthermore, Jesus kept company with sinners—ose who openly defied the Torah or the Law of God y refusing to observe the rituals and feasts required y it. So the Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus, Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with hands defiled?" *Mark 7: 5.*) Jesus himself had the reputation of not eing too careful about the tradition of the elders the faith of the fathers). He did not keep the Sabath in the way all good people knew it ought to be ept. He was caught plucking ears of grain and healng the sick on the Sabbath, things which all good ews knew should not be done.

But all these things alone would probably not have een sufficient to cause the Jews to put Jesus to death. he one thing that seemed to bring the "Jesus" affair o its climax was the claim that he was the Messiah. A an *may* be excused for openly violating the law of od, but he cannot be excused for claiming that he is he true *upholder* of the law of God which he has roken! Such a claim upsets the standards of man; it urns the world upside down.

The True Damnation

The men of the world, therefore, had Jesus put to eath as a breaker of the law—indeed, as a blashemer against God. In doing so, they were convinced hat they themselves were the righteous ones, the upholders of the law. To be sure, the men of the world did not claim to be perfect themselves. They knew that from time to time they "slipped up" in obeying the law. But they at least knew what the law was and did not openly defy it!

(Notice that, at the time of the crucifixion, even the disciples were among the "men of the world." They did not *understand,* and so went away discouraged, probably convinced that Jesus had been a fraud.)

But after the crucifixion the great miracle occurred. The Father vindicated the Son. He raised him from the dead and showed him to the disciples. And through the Spirit the church was given "eyes to see" Jesus as the Messiah. The resurrection declared to them that *Jesus* was the righteous one! But if Jesus was *righteous,* what did this say about the "men of the world," the very ones who had just put him to death as a sinner? It declared *them* to be the *sinners!* Suddenly they realized that what they thought had been their own righteousness and obedience was, in reality,

rebellion and disobedience. In *seeing* Jesus as the *Christ* they came to know themselves as sinners; in being saved they came to know their need for salvation.

Illustration: A student in a geometry class is required on an examination to work a theorem. He does so and leaves the class, confident that he has worked it correctly. So confident is he that when his classmates tell of different results they got he assures them that they must have failed the test. But in class the following day, the instructor works the theorem correctly on

the board, showing our student that he had missed it completely. Upon seeing the right answer, he realizes that he had been utterly wrong all along, and cries out, "Well, I'll be damned!" It is the truth, the right answer, that acquaints him with his error and so condemns—damns—him. It is precisely in being "set straight" that he realizes his need for being set straight. Before this, he was confident, in his error, that he had been right.

During the time when we do not know God, we think of ourselves as righteous people. We have the right answers about life. We think that we know what

is right and what is wrong, and so judge ourselves to be righteous according to this knowledge. We admit, of course, that we occasionally "sin" against God's will, but we atone for our sin by prayer and repentance, and so convince ourselves that we are basically good and that God will certainly reward us for our goodness. But when this man Jesus comes along, breaking the law and saying that the harlots enter the Kingdom of God before we do, we are shocked and offended at his nerve. And when, through his life and his teaching, he indicates that man is to be a humble creature who serves his brother (*Mark 10:21*), we turn away from him sorrowfully, seeing that he is not the Messiah we want, for we have great possessions—or ambitions. So we crucify him—simply by refusing to take either his life or his teaching seriously. We become Pharisees who claim that *we* follow the teachings of Jesus, whereas all "those other people" don't. We pray: "We thank thee, God, that we are not as other people are—communists, atheists, foreigners. We go to church regularly. We contribute generously to humanitarian causes. . . ." We are confident that we are basically righteous—that our hearts are in the right place. Thus far, we really have no idea of what sin is. Like the geometry student, we are confident that we are right and so accuse others, including Jesus, of being wrong.

A Choice Company

But the God who sent Jesus to die for us has predestined us for greater things and so does not leave us in this bondage. He gives us the eyes to see Jesus as he really is and declares him to be the true Messiah. In other words, God's Holy Spirit witnesses to our spirits that this man, Jesus of Nazareth, is the *Christ*. And when this happens, all that we can do is to fall on our knees and say with utmost seriousness, "I'll be damned—I am condemned." For the Christ, the New Adam, shows us up for what we are. Now we know that all our so-called righteousness was a "show" we were putting on to try to "impress" God with our goodness. Now we can join company with Job in the Old Testament—good old righteous Job—who, when he finally met God, knew what it meant to be a sinner. Now we can join company with Isaiah, who, when he saw the Lord "high and lifted up," could only say, "I am a man of unclean lips. . . ." Now we can join company with doubting Thomas, who, upon seeing the risen Christ, fell down and cried out, "My Lord and my God!"

When God declares that Jesus is the New Adam, the one true man, then we see that our old ideas about "who we are," our ideas about the "real us," are wrong. We are not beings who can put God in our debt by our good works, and all our "good works" performed from this motive are rebellious works. Now we can see Jesus' teachings for what they truly are: the gracious words of God that call us back to our humanity, not a new set of rules to obey if we "want to get to heaven."

It is most important to notice that this conviction of sin which comes when Jesus is seen as the Christ is a *total* conviction of ourselves; the knowledge of total depravity arises at this point. When we stand before the cross of Jesus, knowing that the man on that cross is God's anointed, we don't bother to confess *sins*—little things that we have done wrong. If we did so, we should still be trying to defend ourselves as *basically* righteous. No, before the cross we must confess *ourselves* as sinners: it is *we* who are wrong, not just our *acts*.

But now it should be clear that this knowledge of total depravity is not a pessimistic doctrine at all, for the knowledge of total depravity comes at the very moment that we are declared forgiven. Jesus Christ, the bearer of the good news about God, also declares us sinners. Notice that it is *only* when Jesus is truly seen as Christ that *we* are condemned. But when Jesus *is* truly seen as Christ, he is truly seen as our Redeemer. To put it bluntly, there is no real knowledge of sin apart from real knowledge of salvation: Our Savior "teaches" us our sin.

Teachings Concerning Destination

Now we can also see the *deadly* danger of separating the teachings of Jesus from the role of Jesus as Messiah. If we simply regard Jesus as the "good teacher," then our own ideas of our salvation remain the same: "salvation" is still the reward we want, and the "teachings of Jesus" become instructions about how to get that reward. His teachings become simply a new

alism: "Love God with all your heart and your ghbor as yourself, and God will reward you with ration." But a legalism, old or new, cannot convict of our *sin*. It may convince us that we occasionally wrong things, but it will never convince us that *we* corrupt trees and therefore bear corrupt fruit. But ess *we* (and not just our acts) are convicted of sin, shall not know what it means to call Jesus our d.

Consider the Pharisees, pictured in *Matt. 9: 9-13,* whom Jesus said: "Those who are well have no d of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and rn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacri-.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" *12-13*). The Pharisees, because they considered law to be a list of "things to do," failed to see nselves, in the light of the law, as the sick who were need of a physician. Therefore, their obedience to law was mere sacrifice, not mercy; that is, they what the law ostensibly required in order to ac-e a righteousness of their own. But what the law lly required was *mercy;* it called them to be those loved without an ulterior motive, without hope of n. Because they failed to see the law as requiring of themselves, the Pharisees failed to see them-es condemned by it; they failed to see themselves inners.

f we see Jesus' teachings simply as a list of "things do" for a reward, then we, too, shall fail to see ourselves convicted as sinners by them. But Jesus did not come to make us into twentieth-century Pharisees. He came to call sinners. His mission is to make us, who are sinners, truly merciful—to make us into genuine human beings who *do* truly love our fellow men, love them not to get a reward, but simply because we were created by God to love them. The mercy God requires from us is love without an ulterior motive. But if Jesus' teachings are taken as a new legalism, the only love possible is that love *with* an ulterior motive, love to win the approval of God—love, that is, that ceases, in the process, to be love.

But when Jesus' teachings are not separated from his role as the Messiah, then they are seen as the goal of our life, as the revelation of what our salvation is. When this is the case, then love of the enemy, going the second mile, being the servant of all, and laying down one's life are not means for getting into some Kingdom of God "out there" later on. They are rather acts of a *man in the Kingdom*—the acts of the saved man.

Jesus' teachings are not "ways and means" to get us into heaven, producing in us some guilt over shortcomings. Jesus' teachings are *ends, goals*. As descriptions of our salvation or of our true humanity, they condemn *us* utterly as *sinners*. They call us not just to revise our *conduct,* but to be *new creatures*. They require us to change our destination, not just our means of getting there.

T II

7

RESTORATION

"Restoration," in a way, is the pivotal concept for our understanding of the New Testament. The New Testament writers witness to Jesus as the New Adam, and from this witness we come to understand who we are as men. We rebel against our restoration to the image of the New Adam and so make an idol in our own images and call it Jesus. We do this when we acknowledge Jesus as a "good teacher," or as anything other than the concrete New Adam in whom our humanity is graciously restored to us by God.

d *Matt. 21: 28-32; Mark 10: 17-27; Acts 3: 1-10.*

THE easiest way to ignore God is to be religious. In the parable recorded in *Matt. 21: 28-32,* a ner tells his son to go and work in the vineyard. The says that he will not go, but later repents and goes work. The second son, although he said, "I go, sir," y ignored his father. By implication, Jesus was ing that the Pharisees, although extremely re-ous, were giving God no more than lip service. The gious, who say, "Lord, Lord," do not enter the gdom, but those who do the will of the Father. e *Matt. 7: 21.*) Jesus' most bitter words are di-ed not toward the atheists or the pagans, but ard the religious Pharisees.

n this connection Jesus acted in the role of the Old Testament prophets. Amos, for example, had thundered out God's condemnation of those who obscured justice by "being religious." Later, Jeremiah showed no patience with the citizens of Jerusalem who thought there was safety in piously repeating the words, "This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." They might be safer if they would be more faithful and less pious, said Jeremiah. (See *Jer. 7: 3-4.*) Strange as it seems, the Bible is bitterly opposed to religion, for religion turns man away from God!

Religion as an Indoor Sport

This is the sort of statement that needs amplifying, lest it be misunderstood. Religion, in the Bible, is practically synonymous with idolatry. And idolatry is

the practice of making a god in our own image. In earlier articles we have talked about the sin of Adam (man) as his desire to be God himself. Well, of course, we are not so naïve as to believe that we are really gods. We are more subtle than that; we instead *make* gods and endow them with our wishes, our desires, our goals, and then we worship these creatures of our devising. An idol, then, is a god whose will is our will. Religion is the practice of worshiping an idol in order to get from it what we want.

Now the astonishing and extremely clever thing about our idolatry is that we give our idols very impressive names. Sometimes we even call them Yahweh (Jehovah) or Jesus Christ or the Trinity, but so long as they are in our own image, they are still idols, regardless of their names.

Our idolatry, at its root, is an expression of our rebellion against the one true God. God has created us to be obedient servants, but we would rather be masters who give the orders. By making our own gods, we can really be the masters while pretending to be servants. If the God whom we "serve" is the one whose thoughts are our thoughts and whose ways are our ways, then our service to him is really obedience to ourselves. Thus, idolatry is a very comfortable religion. It doesn't upset us; it doesn't demand "unreasonable" things from us; it doesn't turn our world upside down. It allows us to be religious without *really* being obedient. We can convince ourselves that we are obedient; and we think that we have God fooled too.

God, our Creator, out of his unfailing love for us, does not want us to remain in rebellion against him. The Old and New Testaments record what he has been doing in the nation Israel and in Jesus Christ to restore us. *But we don't want to be restored,* for restoration calls us to become human again, to become obedient, to become servants. Restoration takes our comfortable gods away from us and calls us to do unreasonable things; so we devise all sorts of ways to resist it. When the true God speaks his law, we take that law and put it into the mouths of our idols, thereby making it a *means* of attaining *our* goals. Simply observe what has happened to the Ten Commandments.

These commandments were originally a call to Israel to enter a new life before God—to become unto him a special holy people. The commandments described in a brief way what Israel's new life was to be. Their destiny was to be a people who loved God (commandments one to four) and glorify him in a community in which every man is concerned about every other man (commandments five to ten). But what have we done to these commandments? We have made them *the means of getting the destiny we desire.* Our idol is the god made in our image. He promises to give us what we want—a salvation in which we are freed from all the limitations of our humanity. Now we "obey" the Ten Commandments to please *our* god, so he will reward us, and we fool ourselves into thinking that we are righteous! God commands us to *be* human beings again, but we say that if we act human for a while God will let us into heaven.

Our unwillingness to be restored to our humanity is amply seen in the manner in which men have treated Jesus Christ, who became human for us. In Palestine in the first century A.D., the Jews lived in the hope that the Messiah would come and, with mighty acts restore the Kingdom of Israel. The restoration for which they longed included, among other things, the ousting of the hated Romans from their land. When Jesus appeared among them and performed signs and wonders, there was considerable speculation among the people as to whether or not he was the Messiah. So long as there was some hope that he might be, they followed him with interest, if not enthusiasm. But when it became apparent that the *Kingdom* he intended to restore was not the *kingdom* they wanted the Messiah to restore, they got rid of him in a hurry. And notice that they charged him with blasphemy. They were willing to go along with Jesus, to call him Messiah, to be "religious" toward him, so long as he fitted their purposes. But when they found that his purposes were not their purposes, they changed their tune. They wanted no part of this Jesus who taught that the humblest man is the man of true greatness in God's Kingdom. Of humility they had had enough under the Romans. They wanted a god who would bring an end to their humility. If Jesus thought humanity and humility were the same thing, they would show him!

Today, we are not one bit more enthusiastic about being restored to humanity as Jesus understood and revealed it than the people in first-century Palestine. Of course, today we don't condemn Jesus in public. Today, in America, anyone who speaks a bad word about Jesus is treading on dangerous ground. But because Jesus is still today what he was then, he is still not the Messiah we want. We must get rid of him; but if we can't condemn him in public the way the Jews did, what are we to do? The answer is really quite simple. Let's make an idol—a god in our own image—and call him by the name of Jesus! How clever! How safe!

This is our modern way of crucifying Jesus. It is not nearly so messy as nailing a man to a cross. No one will call us "Christ killers" for doing it. No one will make our children live in ghettos because we do it. But it is just as effective a way to get rid of the unwanted Messiah as crucifixion was.

Some Idols Named Jesus

We make an idol in the place of Jesus whenever we acknowledge Jesus to be anything less than the concrete human being, the New Adam, to whose image we are destined to be conformed. One of the easiest ways to do this is to acknowledge Jesus as a good teacher who teaches us *what to do* in order to get into the Kingdom. So long as Jesus is just an ethical teacher

we are safe; thus far he doesn't disturb our aims, our goals, our ambitions. He simply teaches us how to attain our aims, our goals, our ambitions. In this idolatry we are told, "Follow the ethical teachings of Jesus the great teacher, and you will obtain eternal life, you will receive blessings in the Kingdom." (But notice that the Kingdom is still *our* idea of the Kingdom.) Or, "We must return to the great ethical teachings of Jesus of Nazareth if we want to save our Western civilization." Or, "Our moral decay, as witnessed by the television-quiz-show scandals, shows that we must return to Jesus' teachings if we are to win over Russia." In the best *religious* manner we run to Jesus and say to him, "Good Teacher, what must [we] do to inherit eternal life?" (*Mark 10: 17*). We don't ask Jesus the teacher, "Who are we, and who are we to be?" We rather ask him, "What must we do to get what we want?"

But the real Jesus cannot be dealt with in this way. When the rich young ruler asked this same question of Jesus, calling him "Good Teacher," Jesus let him know, in no uncertain terms, that he was not a *good*

Teacher. When the man informed Jesus that he had kept all the commandments from his youth, Jesus answered, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (*v. 21*). Then the man's "countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions." (*V. 22.*) The point of the parable is that the rich young man was willing to *do* anything, so long as doing it did not require him to *be* something different. But he was not willing to *be* a new man, one who loved the poor as Jesus loved them, simply because that was what it meant to be in the Kingdom. He was willing to follow Jesus' teachings, but he was not willing to follow Jesus; that is, he was not willing to accept his true humanity. Or to put it another way, he was willing to accept Jesus' teachings as the means of attaining his own goal, but he was not willing to alter his goal, his aim, his ambition. The Kingdom is not a reward for doing certain things; it is a treasure (restoration to true humanity) that is received when man's understanding of his goal or purpose as a human being is changed.

So long, then, as Jesus is simply our "Good Teacher," whose teachings we follow in order to obtain "eternal life" or to make America strong or to insure our victory over Russia or to further our pet projects, we are still worshiping an idol, who promises us *our* Kingdom, not God's Kingdom. We still ignore (or better, rebel against) the "one thing lacking," our genuine acceptance of the humanity that God gave us and Jesus reveals.

Is Christ the Answer?

A subtle variation of this theme is the "Christ-is-the-answer" idolatry. If we can make Jesus into the idol who answers or solves all *our* problems, then we can safely ignore the real Jesus, who saves (salvages) us and restores us to obedience, rather than solves our problems. Jesus, we should note, did not solve the problems of Peter or of Paul or of any other of the early Christians. He called these men into a new life (full of all sorts of problems and dangers) in which their only genuine concern was to declare the good news that in Jesus Christ is restoration to the Kingdom. In the third chapter of The Acts, the crippled man asked alms of Peter and John. But in the name of Jesus Christ they could not give what the man asked. Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." (*V. 6.*) The crippled man, in his crippledness, did not ask for what he really needed.

We ask for a lot of things that we do not really need, but in our idolatry we fail to ask for the one thing that we really do need. And Jesus Christ of Nazareth does not give us all those things we ask for in the name of our idol. He does not promise peace of mind, success in business, national victory, domestic harmony, or a thousand other things we think we need. Instead, he says, "Follow me." He offers us what we really need, although we dare not ask for it. Jesus Christ of Nazareth (the concrete man, the New Adam) offers us but one thing, our humanity. And notice that this gift does not solve all our "problems." It is peace "which passes all understanding," not peace we can understand. It is the gift of the ability to obey God in the midst of the problems of life.

Worshiping "Jesus" as the answer to our problems means that we have made Jesus simply an idol to cater to our wishes; he is a god who serves us. By worshiping him, we can conveniently ignore Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who, in his genuine humanity, calls us to follow him by becoming a servant of God.

But it must be said again and again that God is not frustrated by our idolatry. The good news of Jesus Christ is just the word that through him God *does* accomplish his work of restoration. God, by his grace, saved a remnant of Israel in the Old Testament, and, in the New Testament, he raised from the dead Jesus Christ, whom we crucified, that he might be the first fruits of a great multitude. By his grace the church exists today as the community of those being restored, those who are being made into the image of Jesus Christ, those who acknowledge him as Lord, and not just as "Good Teacher."

THE LAW BRINGS FREEDOM

"Law" and "freedom" are tricky words. They do not always mean what we think they mean, nor do all writers employ them to express the same ideas. Israel had the law of God; Jesus came not to abolish it, but to fulfill it. In America we have a law. Are these two laws identical in kind? The Christian man is free. Americans, we say, are free people. Are these two freedoms identical in kind? In this article we want to try to come to an understanding of the Biblical meanings of these important words, "law" and "freedom."

Read *Ex. 20: 1-17; Matt. 5: 17-48.*

Generally speaking, we consider laws to be necessary evils. We do not particularly cherish doing the things our laws require, but we do cherish the things that will result from our obedience to the laws. For example, most of us do not regard paying income tax as a worth-while, good, pleasant, or desirable act. If all other things were equal, we should prefer not to pay income tax. But we obey the law requiring us to pay income tax because we live in the hope that the things accomplished by our tax will more than compensate for the unpleasantness of paying it.

But we are free people, we say. What is the relationship between the law on the one hand and our freedom on the other? Ordinarily they are in opposition. The law is a restriction on our freedom, a restriction we are willing to accept only because we hope to gain from our obedience to it something more desirable than our freedom, which is partially sacrificed. This same opposition between freedom and law prevails even in the case of laws against such acts as murder and theft. The law is still looked upon as the limitation of the freedom of one man, but the law is held to be necessary in order to insure the rights of others (including, of course, *their* freedom).

The point thus far is that we think of ourselves primarily as free persons, that is, persons who by our "rights" are not to be restricted without just cause. Only in a secondary sense do we think of ourselves as persons bound by law. The law is thought of as an evil, though a necessary evil, that modifies or restricts the essentially free person.[1]

If this interpretation of freedom and law is read into the Biblical words "freedom" and "law," it is inevitable that the Bible will be misunderstood. In the Bible man is not "free" in the sense that he has the right, simply by virtue of his humanity, to be free from all restrictions in so far as this freedom is compatible with the rights of others. And in the Bible the law of God is not a necessary evil, to be endured simply because the results of obedience are desirable. Nor in the Bible are the law of God and the freedom of man in opposition.

The law of God, as it is summarized in the Ten Commandments, is the word of God to his chosen people, Israel. In trying to grasp its meaning, let us consider it first as the word of God, and then consider it as it is spoken to Israel.

Law as Word of God

In the Bible, the word of God is not like the word of man. When God speaks, he is declaring his sovereign will. This is the will which calls the world into being and makes nations rise and fall. When God says, "Let there be light," there *is* light. When he utters his voice the earth melts. Though the grass withers and the flower fades and man dies, God's word endures forever. When God speaks, man listens. God's word is his creative will, which "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (*Rom. 4: 17*).

But if God's word is his creative power and will, it is just as important to see that his word is the source and definition of *good*. If God says, "Let there be light," then it is *good* that there should be light. If God says, "Let Babylonia rise and conquer Judah," then it is good that Babylonia should rise and conquer Judah. God's creative word about each thing that he creates defines the *good* of that thing. If God creates the fish to swim, then it is good that they swim; if he creates birds to fly, then it is good that they fly. The fact that the fish do not fly as the birds do is in no way an unjust restriction on the fish, nor is the fact that the birds do not swim in any way an unjust restriction on them. It is God's word that is definitive of what is just and unjust.

The Ten Commandments are to be understood as an expression of God's creative will. In two respects God's law is unlike our human law, which we discussed earlier:

1. In the first place, God's law is his creative will. When he utters his voice, things happen. Remember

[1] The author makes no claim that the above analysis is a correct interpretation of the intent of the Constitution of the United States of America. He does think, however, that it is a fairly accurate representation of the thought of the "man in the street" about his freedom.

that this is the God who brings into existence things that were not; therefore, God's law does not depend upon the "good will" or the "attitude of acceptance" of the one to whom it is spoken. When God says, "Thou shalt not steal," his words create a *new obedient man.* God's law creates what it requires or demands. But not so our human law. When the law of man says, "You shall not steal," it does not create a man who does not steal. Obedience to human law is dependent upon the attitude of the man addressed.

2. And in the second place, God's law is definitive of man's good. When, for example, God says to man, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," this commandment does not limit some freedom man otherwise would have, *for there is no "otherwise"!* Man is completely defined by God's creative will for him. Since the law is God's creative will, the law defines man's good; it does not restrict it. There is no "man" apart from the law of God who has a "freedom" that will be restricted by that law. But this is not the case with our human law. We define ourselves as "free" and see the law as a limitation to our freedom; we consider the law to be in opposition to the real, essential "us." It is all right to think of human laws in this way, but it is disastrous to think of God's law in this way.

God's Law to Israel

What happened when God spoke his law to the Israelites? In short, the law *created* the nation Israel, the people of God. It called into existence a community of God where before there had been no community of God. The covenant God made with this new nation was an unbreakable one—unbreakable not because of the "right attitude" or "good will" of the Israelites themselves, but because of God's steadfast, creative love. Therefore, there will always be an Israel, a people of God, although at times it may be only a remnant. God, in his infinite creative and redeeming love, speaks his word—his law—over and over again through Moses, through Joshua, through the judges, through the prophets, in Jesus Christ, through the apostles, and through the preachers. Each time God's word is spoken, it creates God's Israel anew.

Now we must notice carefully that the law of God was not a restriction of the freedom of Israel—a restriction Israel would accept because the results of so doing promised to be desirable. God did not say to the Israelites, "If you do all these restricting things which the law requires, I will give you a nice big reward later on." The covenant was not a bargain in which Israel traded some of its "freedom" for a promised blessing. No! God said to the Israelites, "If you obey the law, you shall be my people." And "being God's people" is not some reward that comes *after* obedience. It is something that is defined by obedience to the law itself. God's people are simply those who live in obedience to his will.

The Captivity of Modern Man

BIG JULIE
By Fernand Leger

What Is Israel's Freedom?

It is quite evident that Israel's freedom is not defined as liberty from unnecessary legal requirements (as we think of our freedom). If God's will, his law, is what defines man's good, then the really free man is the one who is released from anything and everything that prevents him from being obedient to God's law. When God gives his law to Israel, it makes them a nation of people who know for the first time what freedom is. Because they are redeemed from that which enslaved them (their sin or rebellion), they are now free to love God (Commandments one to four) and free to love one another (Commandments five to ten). *They are now free to be just what God wills them to be.* Just as a bird that cannot fly is not free and as a fish that cannot swim is not free, so a man who cannot obey God is not free. Because man has rebelled against God, he has lost his freedom to be obedient. But when God speaks his law to this rebellious man, it turns him around (makes him repent) and frees him from the power that prevented his obedience.

It should be noted that the making of this covenant between God and Israel is an act of God's grace and not a legalistic arrangement. (See the section on "Legalism" in Article 5.) It is the first major step recorded in the Bible of God's restoration of fallen mankind. The God who by his creative word called the first Adam into being out of nothing is preparing to restore, by his same creative word, the rebellious descendants of that first Adam. He does this by creating a nation, Israel, whose Messiah shall then speak this word to all nations. The New Testament is "new," not because it contradicts the Old Covenant, but because it completes it. It is most unfortunate that many people think the Old Testament law offers salvation by good works whereas the New Testament offers it by God's grace. Such an interpretation prevents us from seeing Jesus as the One who *fulfills* the law.

Jesus and the Law

Jesus did not come to abolish the law of God, which had created the nation of Israel; he came rather to fulfill it. He came to complete the work that the law had begun. How is his work to be understood?

We should notice that Jesus fulfilled the law in the sense that he obeyed it: he loved God, and he loved and served his neighbor. In his life of obedience the real meaning of the Ten Commandments is seen. In Jesus the law is not abolished, but is saved from the destruction that the Pharisees and we would inflict upon it.

It is helpful to think of Jesus as John thinks of him, as "the Word become flesh." Above, we have noted that God's word is not just "any word," but is the creative will of God, which brings into being that which it wills. So Jesus is himself the incarnation of God's creative will for man. This incarnation is the climactic point in God's plan to restore his fallen world. Jesus, then, should not be considered simply as a good teacher who tries to get men of good will to come to his side or to share his views and convictions. Rather, he should be seen as the creative gift of God to us men of bad wills—God's gift that restores us to his Kingdom. Just as the law brought the nation of Israel into being from a motley bunch of slaves, so Jesus, the incarnation of the word, brings the church into being from an equally motley bunch of people, including you and me. When God, through his Spirit, enables men to see Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, then things happen: the disciples become new men, Paul evangelizes the world, the Christians turn the world upside down, Luther starts a reformation, men become human beings again. When God gives us eyes to see Jesus as the fulfillment of the law, then for the first time we know what real human freedom is, we are restored to the possibility of being God's obedient creatures again.

UNIT II

9

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

Almost everyone knows that Christianity is a religion of hope. But so are many of the other religions of the world. Therefore, to say simply that Christians are people who have hope is practically meaningless. The real question is, "*What* do Christians hope for, and what is the ground of their hope?" In this article we want to direct our attention to this question, for in answering it we shall come to the very heart of the Christian gospel.

Read *I Peter, ch. 1.*

It is abundantly clear from the New Testament that the hope of the Christian is indissolubly connected with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (*I Peter 1: 3*). Before the resurrection, the disciples were dejected, disappointed men, who had no hope. But when the risen Lord appeared to them, they were changed. Suddenly they became men with a hope so unshakable that no events, no matter how apparently contradictory, could discourage them in their new life. When Paul saw the risen Lord on the road to Damascus, he

was given a new hope, which from that time was the guiding principle of his life. According to the Biblical record, then, it was the resurrection of Jesus (and not, incidentally, his moral teachings) that made the difference to his followers.

Hope and Resurrection

The question now to be asked is, What *sort* of hope does the resurrection give? The most obvious answer, but one that is inadequate on several accounts, is that it gives us a hope for our own resurrection, that is, it gives us assurance of life for ourselves after death. The difficulty with this answer is that the belief in a life after death is by no means an exclusively Christian belief, and so if we stop with it, we miss the distinctively Christian understanding of the resurrection. (Notice that this easy answer gets us back to the view that everybody is going to the same place, but by different paths.) The Christian hope is not simply that since one man has been raised from the dead, other men may also be raised from the dead. This would take us back to legalism, with its usual question, "Do you want to be saved, that is, do you want to live again after you die?" The obvious answer is, "Yes!" So this instruction follows, "Believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, and you shall be raised also." But the Christian hope is this: Because *Jesus* has been raised from the dead, we shall be raised to a new life *like his life*. It is the *person Jesus* who is of crucial significance here. It is *his life* that gives content to the Christian hope and distinguishes it from all other religious hopes for life after death.

"Thy Kingdom Come"

This hope is expressed in the familiar petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come." We have already seen in earlier articles that the Kingdom of God stands for the complete restoration of fallen mankind to obedience to God. And we have also seen that in Jesus' life true human obedience to the Father's will was manifest; through his obedience Jesus has shown what life in the Kingdom of God really is. Therefore, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we are praying that we may be raised from our death and restored to our intended status as obedient creatures before God.

The Christian hope, therefore, is essentially *God-centered*. It is not the hope that our wills for ourselves (rewards, future life, etc.) will be fulfilled, but that God's will for us will be victorious over our sinful wills. It is the hope that the old Adam, which we are, will be crucified with Christ, and that the New Adam, which we shall be, will be raised with him. It is the hope that we, who have tried to play the role of God and thus have rebelled against the one true God, shall be restored to our humanity as it is revealed to us in the life and teaching of the servant Jesus Christ. That is our true and *only* hope.

The servant Jesus Christ has taught us that the real human being is one who lives for the praise and glory of his Creator. Because of our rebellion against our Creator, this is something which we have a hard (impossible, let's say) time understanding or believing. Some speculative people have complained that God selfishly created us to live for *his* glory. So they invent a god who lives for their glory and tell the world that their human personality is of infinite worth (How selfish can men get?)! In this kind of rebellion we refuse to admit what the Bible tells us over and over again: that we are dust, that we are flesh that will wither and fade like the grass, that we are creatures whose only worth is that bestowed upon us by a loving God who has graciously allowed us to praise and glorify him. No tyrannical, selfish God is forcing us to glorify him. We are *nothing;* a gracious God, who does not even need our nothingness, has graciously created us anew to be his people, who will live to his glory:

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy." (*I Peter 2: 9-10.*)

So it is our Christian hope that we may be born anew to a life of obedience that will redound to the praise, honor, and glory of God. This is the life which will vindicate Jesus Christ, the life which will declare to the world that Jesus was right and that we were wrong. The heaven for which the Christians long is the heaven in which Jesus' earthly life will be acknowledged as the true human life and will be the image to which all of God's people are restored.

The importance of defining the Christian hope in terms of the concrete life of Jesus cannot be emphasized enough. If our eyes are taken from Jesus, our hope immediately degenerates into a pagan hope of one sort or another, in which *our* glory, not God's glory, is our chief concern or in which *our* vindication, not Christ's vindication, is of primary interest. It is astounding how many of us—good church members—often hope for a salvation in which *our* true worth (by our own estimations, of course) is recognized by God or for one in which we are shown to be right and our enemies are shown to be wrong. But the Biblical hope is for a salvation in which Christ is declared to be the righteous One and God declared to be the One of worth.

The Ground of Our Hope

"Through him you have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. . . . You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for

'All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord abides for ever.'

That word is the good news which was preached to you." (*Ch. 1: 21, 23-25.*)

It might well be asked what assurance the Christian has for his hope. The only answer that can be given is *God*. It was God who raised Jesus from the dead and presented him to the disciples, thus giving them a new hope. The resurrection of Jesus was God's undeniable declaration to them about what would be. This was the eternal word which would not perish, though all else perish. The disciples were sure of their hope because God had declared to them, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, his will for man; because it was God's will, it could not fail. It was not their own virtue or their own right-mindedness or their own good will or even their own faith that gave the disciples hope. If they had had to depend on these, they would indeed have been hopeless men. Their hope was based on God, who can and does do what is impossible with men.

So with Christians in every age. When God's Spirit witnesses to our spirits that Jesus is the Christ, he announces to us his Kingdom, which shall be. This Kingdom is not a conditional affair, dependent in some way upon man's acceptance of it or his willingness to acknowledge it. In Christ God declares his creative will, his determination, to create a new people for himself, a people who will accept and acknowledge him and his Kingdom. If God's Kingdom were dependent upon us—the old Adam—there would be no hope. But there is hope, sure hope, because God is at work in Jesus Christ, the New Adam, to create for himself his Kingdom.

Because Christ has been raised from the dead, we can live with a certain nonchalance toward the things in the world that seem to contradict that hope. Consider it this way: The crucifixion of Jesus comprehends the total sinfulness of man. It represents all that man can do in rebellion against God. It is man's ultimate rejection of his humanity, for in the act of the crucifixion man condemns as sinner the *one* man who was righteous, the one man who truly accepted his humanity. But God, by raising Jesus from the dead, has overcome, superseded, canceled out our most devastating effort. In the resurrection, God smiles upon us and says, "Though you rebel against me, I still love you, and my love is greater than your rebellion." He tells us that he has the final word about our destiny. And when God tells us that he has the final word, there is nothing else to do but to believe it—HE has the final word!

If man's supreme act of sin, the crucifixion of Jesus, has been overcome by God, how much more are the sins of the world also overcome in it! Therefore, so long as we hope in Christ, we cannot take sin more seriously than we take God's grace. Apart from Christ, it might seem that sin is more serious than grace; we might well become discouraged and lose hope. The events of our time seem to be in direct contradiction to the Christian hope. Man's acts of inhumanity to his fellow man do not seem to diminish as time goes by. Scientific progress teaches us new ways to oppress and tyrannize our brothers, as well as new ways to be our brothers' keepers. We can, and do, kill one another more efficiently than ever before. Racial hatred seems to be as strong as ever and now has at its service all the latest psychological techniques. Pride and greed, appropriately disguised as worthy ambition, are considered cardinal virtues in our land. If we survey our world scene apart from Jesus Christ, we might well cry out in despair, "God is dead; the devil reigns!" (This apparently is what the devil thought at the time of the crucifixion!) But when Jesus Christ is remembered, all these things which seem to contradict the Christian hope are seen not to be the final word. Rather, they are seen to be the sins for which Christ died! The sins of our world today sent him to the cross just as surely as the sins of the ancient world. But if these great sins of our times are the sins that crucified Christ, they are precisely the sins that are overcome and declared to be forgiven in the resurrection.

Consider the life of Paul in this connection. In his ministry Paul faced almost every hardship that could be inflicted by man or by nature. (He cataloged these hardships in *II Cor., ch. 11.*) From our point of view Paul had every right to be discouraged and to think that God was not in control. But Paul did not become discouraged. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, life, angels, principalities, things present, things to come, powers, height, and depth all apparently contradicted the Christian hope. But Paul hoped in God's love in spite of all these things. Why? Paul's answer was quite simple: Christ Jesus was raised from the dead! (See *Rom. 8: 34-39.*) Paul, then, could live with a nonchalance toward all the troubles he experienced because he knew that these could not overcome God's will as it is revealed in Christ Jesus. In the resurrection God had declared *them* overcome.

Likewise, the resurrection makes our hope sure. Therefore, we as Christians have no cause to despair amid the disasters and tragedies of our own perilous times. Rather, in the midst of them we are called to proclaim the good news that God's word, as declared in the resurrection, shall abide forever (*I Peter 1: 25*). In spite of the fact that Satan's kingdom appears to be winning the day (as it appeared to be on Good Friday), God's Kingdom shall triumph and be the everlasting Kingdom (as Easter Day proclaims). Because Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, we have been born anew to a living hope, the hope that in our lives the life of Jesus Christ will be vindicated and God our Father will be glorified.

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE AND THE NEW LIFE

In the last article we noted that the Christian hope in concrete terms is the hope that we shall be restored to our authentic humanity, as humanity is seen in the person Jesus Christ, and that in this new humanity we shall glorify our Creator. In this article it is our aim to see the connection between that hope, on the one hand, and our everyday lives, on the other. This Christian hope is not merely some vague picture of an uncertain future; it is a sure hope that gives every moment of life its significance. It has as its chief concern what God is doing among us.

Read the Sermon on the Mount, *Matt., chs. 5 to 7.*

TODAY we are to discuss briefly the Christian life, or Christian ethics. It is quite clear from the Bible that faith in God cannot be isolated from daily life and remain simply a Sabbath exercise. God's people are called to *live* as God's people.

Because it has always been more or less clearly understood that the Biblical faith makes demands upon us, many of us who consider ourselves to be practical people become impatient with theoretical or philosophical or theological talk about God and Jesus, and we almost cry out: "Don't tell me what I am supposed to believe; tell me what I am supposed to do! Don't give me theory; give me practical advice."

This attitude is extremely dangerous. It assumes that Christian behavior or Christian ethics can be reduced to a list of things to be done and a list of things not to be done, or that Christians are simply people who do certain things or don't do certain other things. This attitude is dangerous because it fails to appreciate the true character of Christian obedience and almost inevitably leads to legalism. The legalistic formula runs something like this:

1. Christians go to heaven.
2. Christians are people who do A, B, and C, and do not do E, F, and G.
3. Conclusion: If I do A, B, and C, and do not do E, F, and G, I shall be living the Christian life; I shall go to heaven.

This is all very simple, very practical, very nontheoretical, very popular, and very damnable. It is the practical man's religion. The practical man knows what he wants ("heaven"), and he sets out to get it by doing what is necessary to get it.

But notice carefully that in this sort of legalism there is no real connection between what the man wants ("heaven") and what he does (or refrains from doing) to get it. Legalistic obedience (don't drink, don't smoke, don't swear, go to church, read the Bible, believe in the virgin birth, the resurrection, miracles, etc.) is something that it is necessary to endure in order to get one's reward. Obedience in this case is at best only grudgingly given. Many of the recurring "jokes" told about heaven, with the redoubtable "St. Peter" at the gate, end with punch lines that depend on the fact that the people in heaven are doing what they were not allowed to do on earth (smoking, drinking, loafing, etc.). Aside from the fact that they are seldom funny, such heaven "jokes" reveal the standard popular conception of heaven as the place where we do what we really want to do. This conception assumes, furthermore, that the law is an arbitrary restriction placed upon us by God—a restriction which, if heeded, will earn us entrance into heaven. In this understanding, however, there is no real connection between what heaven is and what the law requires man to do.

But as we have seen in earlier articles, the Bible does not understand heaven to be a place where we get to do the things that we have always wanted to do but were not allowed to do. Rather, it understands heaven to be the reign of God, in which man is restored to perfect obedience to God. And as we have also seen, the law of God is not a list of restrictions to which man must submit in order to get his hoped-for reward. It is rather a description of life in the Kingdom of God. The law does not tell us what we must do (grudgingly) to get to "heaven." It shows us what it means to be a human creature of God in his Kingdom. Thus, in Biblical thought, unlike in legalism, the connection between heaven and the law is real and indissoluble. The man who genuinely hopes for heaven hopes also to be made obedient to the law. The two hopes are really the same hope. Conversely, if a man hates the law and observes it only grudgingly, he also hates the Biblical heaven, because the essence of heaven is simply the fulfillment of the law.

Christian Obedience

If the Christian life is not grudging obedience to a legalistic code, what is it? *It is the life that reflects the genuine Christian hope.* It is the life that does not contradict the hope that God's Kingdom shall come.

Generally speaking, our lives do reflect our hopes and ambitions. If it is our ambition, for example, to keep up with the Joneses, that ambition will dominate our actions, and our actions will reflect it. Further-

more, it is our hope that gives meaning to our lives. If it is a man's genuine hope to be a top-flight surgeon, for example, then the significant, meaningful events in his life will be those which contribute to that goal. Specifically, then, the Christian's hope for the Kingdom determines the actions of his life and gives them meaning. If it is the genuine Christian hope that we shall be restored to our creatureliness, in which we glorify God by being what he made us to be—servants of our fellow men, if this is our hope, then we shall live *now* as creatures of God. Or to put it another way, the obedient Christian life is a *witness* to the Christian hope for man that is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Christian Ethics Versus Right and Wrong

Consequently, Christian ethics is not concerned with right and wrong in an abstract way. To illustrate, let's take the typical question about right and wrong: Is it wrong to kill? First, let us give the kind of answer that a legalist might give:

"Of course, it's wrong to kill. It's plainly stated so in God's law. If you want to be saved, you had better not kill."

In the legalist's answer no attempt is made to understand *why* God's law prohibits killing or why the Christian does not do it. The fact that it is in the book is enough.

This kind of answer was evidently being given in Jesus' time. In *Matt. 5: 21-24*, Jesus discussed the commandment, "You shall not kill," and restored the original meaning to it by saying that anyone who is at odds with his brother has already broken the commandment. True righteousness does not come through doing "right" things and not doing "wrong" things. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was pointing out that the commandments are not legalistic requirements by which one earns a reward, but are themselves descriptions of man's goal, his salvation, his restoration. The law prohibits killing because, in God's Kingdom, every man is his brother's keeper, his brother's servant, not his brother's god. So, as Jesus makes explicit, this commandment by implication also prohibits our being angry with our brother, for the simple reason that in God's Kingdom every man is in harmony with every other man. The commandment against adultery is treated by Jesus in the same manner. Adultery is prohibited because God's Kingdom is a kingdom of faithfulness; unfaithfulness of any kind —even lust—bears a false witness about the hoped-for Kingdom.

Therefore, in the Christian life, the character of God's Kingdom, and not some abstract list of "do's" and "don'ts," determines true obedience. In the obedient human life, every act witnesses to the hope that man will be restored to the Kingdom of God.

When Christian obedience is understood in terms of witness to the Christian hope, then it can be seen more clearly that every decision we make in life is of Christian significance. The law of God is relevant to every facet of life, and not just to stealing, killing, committing adultery, etc.

For example, when the Ten Commandments are considered to be a legalistic code, they do not give us any help on such important decisions as what job to take, whether or not to go to college, whom to marry, and whom to vote for in the coming election.

There is no commandment that says to me, "Vote for Smith instead of Jones," or "Marry Susie instead of Jane." Is God not concerned about these affairs? He certainly is concerned, for such decisions as these are precisely the ones that are of crucial significance in our lives. But if we search for a law that says legalistically, "Thou shalt," or "Thou shalt not," we shall search in vain.

But when the Ten Commandments are seen as the description of the Kingdom, then every act of man comes within their scope. Every act is either a witness for or a witness against the Kingdom described in God's law. When I vote for one presidential candidate instead of another, this act bears witness to what I hope for the people of the world who will be affected by our foreign policy. If I vote for candidate Jones, a rock-ribbed isolationist in these days of international strife, who thinks that India and China are no concern of ours, then I shall be bearing a false witness to the Christian hope that in God's Kingdom all men shall be one another's keepers. The occupation I choose must not bear a false witness against my neighbor; it must bear witness to the Christian understanding that my neighbor is one whom God has given to me to serve. The marriage I contract is not indifferent in God's sight; it too must be a faithful witness to the Kingdom of God (see *Eph. 5: 21-33*).

Therefore, Christianity and politics, Christianity and marriage, Christianity and the office or business, *do* and *must* mix. To separate these areas of life from Christianity is to witness to the world that we are not our brother's keeper, that Jesus is not the Christ, that we are gods, and that God's Kingdom shall not come!

Therefore, in making the decisions with which we are faced at every moment in life, we are not to ask ourselves, abstractly, if Act Z is right or wrong. Rather, we are to ask ourselves, "To what will my doing of Act Z witness? Will it witness to my Christian hope that we all shall be conformed to the image of Christ, that we all shall glorify God in the Kingdom in which Christ is vindicated? Or will it witness to some other hope, which denies that Jesus is the Christ?"

Since Christian obedience is a witness to a hope, there can be no Christian obedience without that hope. If a man does not have that hope, all his apparent obedience will be pharisaical adherence to a legalistic code. True obedience springs only from love of God and his Kingdom. In *Luke 6: 45* we read Jesus' words,

ST. FRANCIS OF THE CURBS
By Ethel P. Hood, sculptor

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil." We do not become good by doing good things. On the contrary, we can do good things only if we are restored to goodness. The whole point of the Bible is the good news that *God* is at work so to restore us. God has sent his creative Word, Jesus Christ, into the world to show us what our hope is. When God's Spirit gives us eyes to see and ears to hear Jesus as our hope, then we are born anew to the possibility of doing good works—of being obedient to our hope. Because we have been restored by God through the Word and the Spirit, we can now live as authentic human beings. We are now free to be his people, who, because we hear his Word, witness to our certain hope that it shall be accomplished.

The Christian Round Table

UNIT I

An Abundance of Possessions

By James W. Jondrow

1: ESCAPE FROM WEALTH

EVEN the $30,000-a-year wage slave would make out better with another ten thousand for the little niceties of life instead of having to get along on just the necessities. Most people figure they could live just right with about 30 per cent more income, no matter what their income is. Certainly you wouldn't catch them admitting they're wealthy!

For a country full of people just scraping along on the necessities, it is odd to find ads in all the magazines telling about gifts for "the man who has everything." A solid gold toothpick is a real comfort to have. If you want to stay away from the luxurious things, maybe a more practical gift would be a car radio that automatically zeroes in on the stations without your having to touch it. Ordinary people in almost any other country on earth would be completely unbelieving if they saw young workers in the United States driving their own cars. And the idea of any kind of radio in the car would be entirely beyond imagination.

Equipment for Happiness

When you look at it from any outside point of view, Americans are wealthy. It's not just the rich Americans. Even the "down and out" are down to a level envied by half the people of the world. Wealth is not just money in the bank or in the pocket. Property, clothes, books, furniture, and regular meals are signs of wealth. The power to earn is wealth. Education puts a person far up on the scale of the prosperous. Leisure time—a regular weekend off or a two-week vacation—is like money in the bank (though it looks the opposite sometimes). Even insurance is wealth that sets us apart as having more than the bare necessities.

Wealth and gracious living go together. And apparently people want gracious living more than anything else in the world. Just read the ads for the things you can get on easy payments that will give you the "ultimate." You'll know you've arrived when you get some of the obvious signs of "good living." Or if the real thing is still a little beyond you, you can look as if you've arrived even while you're just getting started. For example, *Mad* magazine presents barbecue pits for the back yard—cheap cardboard fakes, "but the neighbors will know you've arrived" when they see the fake smokestack peering out over your rustic back fence.

If you want to be debonair, drink the right kind of soft drink. You want "wonderful things" indicated about you? Own the car that recounts these things to people. Is it security you want? "Your future is safe" with the men of this insurance company, each bringing to his clients "over a million dollars' worth of security and peace of mind." Or, for a daring life, here's a perfume that "makes things happen today you'll want to remember tomorrow!" Missing something? "Now's the time to start living." How? Get sterling silverware. "Better living" comes with "a home of your own." Maybe hang a sign on the wall, "God bless the First National Bank's happy home," but make "your first budget consideration your home and your happiness."

Where is a person headed? Of course, he's headed for better living, peace of mind, a safe future, real living, people knowing he's debonair, with an exciting life that he'll always be happy to remember. How is he getting there? By loading up on all the equipment that brings happiness. Happiness is a budget problem. Just keep that budget divided up among the right payments, and the American dream will arrive: a station wagon in every carport, and a sports car under every carefree, fun-loving, young knight.

A Scratch on Your Heart

So everybody finds the way to happiness and is sure he is headed there, and nobody is worried any more.

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A scratch on your Sauerbraten Speedster is a scratch on your heart.

But a sneaking suspicion may come along that this happiness on the budget plan is a thinly gold-plated brick. The clay inside breaks through and looks ugly. The prestige of a car isn't quite enough. When you have the Swift 6 you want a Plush V8, and then you want to move up to a Sumptuous with power-operated glove compartment. Finally the only thing that will do is a Sauerbraten Speedster. With all that value in the hand-rubbed foreign sports job, you can't let it get dusty, scratched, bent, worn, or old. You've finally arrived. You're a jittery guy, always afraid for your high-spirited prestige buggy. A scratch on that is a scratch on your heart. You were a lot happier before you found your way to all this happiness.

It's not just the worry. This super car doesn't get a fellow any closer to his friends. In fact, it intrudes. You can't lord it over friends and still be good buddies with them. The finely-machined bucket of bolts leaves you wishing you had something else.

A ten-day carefree vacation under tropical skies in the magic islands is supposed to be real living. The secretary saves her money for months before, and mortgages her pay for months after, to pick up the tab on a trip "out of this world." But once she's on the trip, she finds that it does not remove all her cares. Even the fabulous islands may leave her on aspirin and tranquilizers.

Despicable Things

Some say that when all is bought and paid for, happiness is still not in what a person has, but in what he is. The material things are not so important after all, we are told, for "you can't take it with you." There are those who have said repeatedly that material things are no good anyway. Some of the familiar passages from the Bible seem to say that. The Sermon on the Mount, for instance, says that a person should not worry about food any more than birds or worry about clothes any more than lilies of the field. And isn't the real fool the person with barns full of grain? The rich young man who came to Jesus was a fine person, but he had to get rid of that material property. Time and again, the Bible seems to suggest that the physical world is bad, that people's attachment to all their material possessions is the reason for unhappiness and loneliness. Struck to the heart by their own materialism, many persons are convinced that if they were really seriously being Christian, they would get rid of all material things, all attachment to the material in life, and be spiritual.

What surprising company a person would keep if he really turned his back on the material blessings and "hit the road"! Francis of Assisi, a Beat character, and a Buddhist monk would be in company with the one who despises the material world.

Francis of Assisi is a hero to many because of his appreciation of the simple life. His statues seem saintly, standing there feeding the birds. In the early 1200's he organized his band of followers about the "rule of poverty" because good Christians must "despise the world." According to his idea, property is like a load carried into a river: the load pushes the man under before he can get across.

In the fact that they despise the world, it's hard to find much difference between Francis of Assisi and members of today's Beat Generation. The Beatniks' "bible," *On the Road,* by Jack Kerouac, is the story of high-speed world despisers, racing from town to town, completely unattached. The one who is beat has no pad, so he bums sleeping space anywhere there are kindred souls. He has no car, but a borrowed one gives top-speed transportation before it collapses in a wreck,

driven to pieces. He knows that owning things, keeping up his payments, caring for things, all tie him down and cut him off from real life. The Beat person turns his back on these and wanders the world, poverty-stricken, on the road to "way-out truth." Unbothered by the material world, he is going to try to find real life.

Among the religious groups that strive to cut loose from the material things of life is that of the Buddhists. To Buddhists the thing that makes life bad is desire. Men and women are in slavery to the things they desire. These desires are mostly physical. The real way to eliminate the bad in life, then, is to overcome desire and become so purely spiritual that you have no desire left. Real enlightenment follows. You have arrived at a happy state.

Francis of Assisi, the Buddhist monk, and the Beat character divide life into two areas—the material and the spiritual. The man who knows where to find good life, they are saying, finds it in the spiritual area. The material part of life is full of tricks, ugly things that tempt, and should be off limits. In company with these people, a person might suppose that to be really serious about being Christian, he would cut himself off from the material world, despise it, not care whether school keeps or not, let business and depressions take care of themselves, and commit himself to living in "the real world of the spirit."

Has God walked off from the material world? Does he despise it? If we were serious about following Christ, would we despise it? Such questions cannot be answered with an easy yes or an easy no.

2: SPIRITS ARE TOO TRANSPARENT

Some Christians try to find spiritual good by despising the world and all its physical enjoyments. They are convinced that their religion projects them into a spiritual world and makes the material world off limits.

The possibility of being pure spirits, however, is rather unlikely for flesh-and-blood people who must eat material meals and sleep in material beds through the material night. It is hard to despise the world unless someone else is around who doesn't despise it and who can keep the purely spiritual people from starving or freezing to death.

Real people can't cut loose from the material things of life. They're built wrong. Such spirits as they have are firmly attached to bodies. Human beings can have no idea what it would be like to be "purely spiritual" —a spirit without a body. But they're pretty sure it wouldn't be fun. After all, activities such as thinking and loving are things done by thick, live people, full of protoplasm, not by transparent ghosts. So it's embarrassing if we have to escape from the real world to be Christians. We can't do it.

God's Handiwork

Something else embarrasses our attempt to escape from the material world: the Bible speaks of material creation as "good."

A Broadway play, for example, presents a character with a good Old Testament respect for the material world. The play is *J.B.*, by Archibald MacLeish.[1] J.B. —Job from the Bible, put in modern dress—is a confident American businessman, the kind whose staff chirps "G' morning, J.B.," as he strides into his office. At the Thanksgiving dinner J.B.'s wife, Sarah, mentions how much J.B. likes leaves. He replies:

J.B.: You love them too. You love them better.
Just because you know their names
You think you choose among your flowers:
Well, you don't. You love the lot of them.

Sarah: I can't take them as a gift though:
I owe for them. We do. We *owe*.

J.B.: Owe for the greening of the leaves?

Later Sarah tries to explain that J.B. deserves happiness and good life, but J.B. replies:

J.B.: That's not true. I don't deserve it.
It's not a question of deserving. . . .
Nobody *deserves* it, Sarah:
Not the world that God has given us.
But I believe in it, Sal. I trust in it.
I trust my luck—my life—our life—
God's goodness to me.

To look at one's happiness and at the world lying at one's feet with such trust is good Old Testament faith. J.B. assumes that this life is good, that God gives it that way. This man can't despise the world.

Genesis begins with the narrative of God's creation of all that is. Not only does it say that he created things, but that "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (*Gen. 1: 31*). It hardly seems that people should despise the material world if God holds it to be good. C. S. Lewis says: "God never meant man to be a purely spiritual creature. . . . He likes matter. He invented it."

All through the Old Testament it is assumed that the material world is good.

"When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars which thou hast established;
what is man that thou art mindful of him . . . ?"
(*Ps. 8: 3-4.*)

[1] Copyright © 1956, 1957, 1958, by Archibald MacLeish. Quotations used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

"The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork."
(*Ps. 19: 1.*)

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."
(*Ps. 24: 1.*)

The creation, including the heavenly bodies, is good. God gave it. Who can despise a world like that? The Old Testament man can't turn against the world unless he is turning against God's good work.

The Word Made Flesh

Christians don't throw over the Old Testament's respect for the creation. If God despised the material world as much as some human beings try to, the major events that are described in the New Testament would be pretty much out of place. According to the New Testament, God became flesh—physical, worldly flesh—for the sake of the worldly, material creatures he called into existence. He dwelt among us and, in real human flesh, met his death, a physical death, to carry out the supreme mission of help for these humans. What a lot of extra trouble that was if physical life is not important! The great victory is Christ's rising from death. If physical life is to be despised, why does God take so much pains with it?

There's not much real backing in the New Testament for the idea that there are really two separate worlds, the spiritual and the material, with God having a serious interest in only one of them. He gets solidly into both. The most "spiritual" book in the New Testament, The Revelation to John, can't get away from the knowledge that God is important to the world we now occupy. The voices of heaven say, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." (*Rev. 11: 15.*) If this is to be taken seriously, then we must recognize that Christ "makes sense" out of this world. For instance, look at the salesman, beating himself to pieces to knock off competition, to get to a top job that takes all the heart out of him by the time he's fifty. Without the Word made flesh in Christ, the ulcer-bedeviled business world appears to be a senseless trap. But realizing that Christ did his real work with the sick and not with the well, we can begin to understand the drive for power that motivates men who are always trying to make gods of themselves. There is hope for even the dog-eat-dog business world if God brings about the kind of changes Christ said could be made in sinful men. Or take the social whirl, with the females using every bluff they can to appear something they aren't, and the males in their way putting on just as clever a show. It's a crazy Punch-and-Judy show. But these hypocrites are just the kind of creatures Christ claims to be able to make into something. Although the social kingdom of this world is a wreck, Christ can make sense even out of that.

What sense can Christ make out of this world?

What kind of changes will restore men and women to the life God intended for them? Before reading further in this article, read Unit II, Articles 2 ("The Kingdom of God") and 3 ("Man in the Kingdom"), in the *Christian Faith and Life* section of this magazine. These articles discuss the disintegration and restoration of the community of God's creatures to which we belong, and the role we are called to take in the community as obedient servants. The author of those articles writes:

"Do we not think of the Kingdom of God, or of Heaven, as the place where we get a reward—where we become the 'real' selves we think we are? But in Biblical thought the Kingdom is the rule of God, where we become what he created and predestined us to be: obedient creatures, who love the Lord our God with all our hearts and minds and souls and strength, and who love our neighbors as ourselves."

From the battle of teaching Johnny to read to the slugging of toe-to-toe nations, the troubles of this world are of deep concern to God. In Christ God begins to untangle the ball of misery. Christians are stopped from the attempt to despise the world. Rather, when they see Christ at work, they come to realize that this world—the ball of misery—is also the responsibility of Christ's church.

Means and Ends

A question lurks. What about the teaching in the Bible that a person should give away all his material things? The rich man in *Mark 10: 17-27* is told by Jesus to "go, sell what you have, and give to the poor." And after the man goes away sorrowful, Jesus says, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" Also, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (*Matt. 6: 19-20*). Throughout the New Testament the poor man appears to be favored and the rich man to be under suspicion.

These teachings, however, are not against the material world as such. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus expresses the same attitude about praying on street corners (*Matt. 6: 5*) as he does about holding and using property. Does he mean, "Despise prayer, it is evil"? No. Rather, prayer has become twisted into a little tin god. It is all out of its right place. That is the problem. So also in the teachings about riches and the material world, the problem is that things have become twisted. Property looms too big. It hangs like a finger over the camera lens, cutting the important things out of the picture. The material world must not be eliminated, but must be put into its rightful place as property that is not a little god.

People have to live in a material world. Christ is important to that world. But the world can sneak up and ruin the whole show.

3: FREEDOM FROM THE RUBBER CRUTCH

THERE is something honest about a man or a boy in a hopped-up car digging out ahead of the competition on a drag strip. He is openly racing. His glory rides in his car and hangs on its performance. In the same way, a track man is proud of a 3:59 mile. These things tell a man what he is worth.

I Am Somebody!

Not every staid, middle-class gentleman would be ready to admit that his car, like a hot rod, is a friend that whispers to him about how far ahead of the competition he is. But tail fins have a language all their own.They speak about the smooth, powerful swoosh of the age of jet power. There's a lift to them that says, "You're right in there at the front, right up with the times!"

A few commentators have suggested that a man can be guided in buying a car by deep cravings to be reassured that he is still a "ladies' man." In *The Hidden Persuaders,* Vance Packard says that convertibles are put in showroom windows to attract men inside, because a convertible makes a man daydream of youth, romance, and adventure. If a car looks debonair, it tells the owner and his friends a continuing story about his manliness. The men end up buying sedans, but they have been lured by the romantic build-up.

Women may be more subtle about what they want a car to say for them. They are concerned about the "style" the car has. They feel that, while they are driving, their front to the public depends upon their automobile's color and lines.

The "golden ear" that is tuned to fantastic hi-fi tells things about a person. Barbarians may be able to stand their music played on something with only four tubes and a tenth of a watt of power, but the refined sophisticate just can't enjoy his unless it's played on a rig with ten imported tubes and a pack of knobs to "roll off," "crossover," and "compensate." Such a person may look like the kind who can be ignored, but one hundred watts of undistorted power booming through a nest of speakers will let the whole world know he's different.

Prescription for a blue mood is a new hat for mademoiselle. The feelings of the chic young lady are tied to the style of her clothes. To be caught at a concert without gloves when this is the "uniform" is to feel worthless. To be caught wearing a skirt that is shorter or longer than this year's correct length is to admit that one has no self-respect. But with a good wardrobe, one is able to face the world.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to dress well. And also it is very comforting to know that naturally a wardrobe cannot be turned into a stiff little tin household god like a car or a woofer! Instead, it can become a much more satisfying silk-and-nylon god.

Sold: A Rubber Crutch

The latest cars, clothes, and electronic gimmicks—all kinds of modern, up-to-date equipment—have become necessities of life to Americans. Without them, life can be depressing, its value uncertain. But why is it that such things should be needed to justify people's lives and make them "feel worth-while"? Several answers are possible. For one thing, as was said in a previous article, we are thick, live people, full of protoplasm. The activities of such creatures are carried on with the use of substantial things. Also, people need at least some things in order to continue living in contemporary society. For instance, it's hard riding everywhere on a bicycle or commuting on a horse; people have to wear clothes; recorded music in the home has value in entertainment and enrichment of appreciation for beauty; a collection of colored slides or a filled photograph album strengthens the family with imprinted memories.

But often the continuous lust for more and better things is stimulated by the inner need for a crutch. People are not satisfied to be merely the creatures that God created them to be. They feel it necessary to consider themselves "Very Important Persons." As suggested in Unit II, Article 3 ("Man in the Kingdom"), of the *Christian Faith and Life* section of this magazine, people tend to imagine that there is a difference between their outward selves and their "real" selves. We all like to think of ourselves—as we really are inside—as heroes, as images of God of such perfection that we can get along with simply a mirror and let God go. That is, we want to assure ourselves, and as many others as possible, that we are actually VIP's, and our life is "a really big shew."

What pours the cold water of anxious doubt on this pipe dream of pre-eminence is the quiet and inadmissible realization that we won't live forever and won't make much of a splash in history anyway. Underneath our demand for recognized self-importance, we fear that our life doesn't have any meaning, that we are really not important at all, that we are actually no good. Our self-respect desperately needs a crutch. The fancy gadgets will serve, as the nearest thing at hand. For most of them, what other real purpose can they serve? As Sam Johnson once wrote, "Fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect." We'll dress correctly, run a good car, use the best deodorants—and maybe no one will notice how afraid we are. These things together make only a rubber crutch, we realize that. But where can a better one be found?

To the Crippled: Walk!

Christian faith does major surgery on people's anxiety. Jesus Christ does not begin by assuring us that the rubber crutch won't work. We may be in a panic, but we are not complete fools: we already know it won't work. Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, says, "Stretch out your hand." And stretching it out, our withered hand is restored. (See *Mark 3: 1-6.*) Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, says, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And forgetting about the wealth with which we had dreamed of buying our rubber crutch, we stand up and walk and leap and praise God. (See *Acts 3: 1-10.*) We are restored to self-cognizant manhood, to genuine humanity, not by a collection of electronic gadgets but by the grace of God. We become willing to be what God intended us to be: not little gods setting up shop in our own do-it-yourself temples, but human creatures whose "flesh is grass," obedient to the one God who creates and restores us as human, obedient creatures. (See *Isa. 40: 6-8; Ps. 103.*) Our lost purpose, the confused and corrupted meaning of our lives, is given back to us when the Spirit of God enables us to see and receive in faith the crucified and risen Christ as our Lord and Savior. This transformation is described and discussed strikingly in the *Christian Faith and Life* section, Unit II, Articles 4 ("Jesus, the One True Man"), 5 ("Do You Really Want to Be Saved?"), 6 ("Jesus Teaches Us That We Are Sinners"), and 7 ("Restoration"). In Article 5, for example, the author writes this about our being given back a genuine humanity:

"By the Spirit of God man can be born anew. And this—joy of joys—is just what happens. The Jesus whom we crucified God raised from the dead and, by his Spirit, enables us to see him as our true Messiah. Apart from the Spirit, who presides at our new birth (*John 3: 5-6*), we see Jesus as a despicable man, who is the epitome of what we do not want to be—a humble servant. But when the Spirit witnesses to our spirit, then we see this same Jesus, this humble servant, as the one who is truly man, as the one who is truly in God's Kingdom, as the one who is the very embodiment of God's will for us. We are then able to make the most serious confession that man can make: Jesus Christ is Lord. We who crucified him were wrong, and he was right! He, not we, really knew what human life is all about! He, and not our vain ambition to be great, defines our *salvation!*"

When God's Spirit brings this about in people, they have no more need of a rubber crutch to lean on. They can then be around the gadgets, anything the world can offer, without grasping after them to keep from falling flat. That is freedom.

The Right Place for Things

But perhaps some person will object, saying: "That sounds too easy. God breaks my dependence on the ambitions of greatness and the gadgets of wealth. But I'm the kind of person who can't just give up all these things and change his interests from hi-fi to God. That may be all right for the pious kind, but try as I might, I can't manage it. I'm just not very spiritual. It's not one of my hobbies, you might say."

It may be difficult to realize it, but we are not required to give up our things and reform our life *before* God will mean anything to us. That would turn the good news around. The Christians are busy saying that it's just when you're sick, sucked in by the "big deal" in life offered by the pride of possessions, that God says, "You're mine." It's not, "Win the battle and then life will be yours," but, "Because I'm in it with you, the battle will be won."

Freed from trying to prove something by the wealth he can collect, a person begins to see the world through different eyes by the grace of God. The prestige of a bank roll, class in his car, style in his clothes—these things are no longer straws at which a drowning man is clutching. This doesn't mean that he becomes a penniless, dowdy slob. It means that he is now in a position to enjoy clothes and money and other things in their rightful places, as God's useful gifts.

4: ON THE BRINK

CERTAIN possessions, kinds of jobs, neighborhoods, and symbolic things—semiuseful and expensive equipment—define for most people the popular and accepted version of the "good life." The chance to get these things is continuously and vociferously promoted in modern American society as the hope and goal of all serious striving. If we can only "arrive" at the point where we can be "very important persons," in our own eyes and in the eyes of a sufficient number of other people, we can then feel that we are living the "good life."

Life Consists in Obedience

The Christian faith rejects that goal. But it does not reject all the things of the world that represent its attainment. It would be much neater if the Christian faith would simply say "yes" or "no." Instead it says "yes" *and* "no." Jesus says, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (*Luke 12: 15.*) But he does not say that a man's life *does* consist in the rejection of all possessions. Neither

poverty nor affluence define the Christian life. The apostle Paul comments (*Phil. 4: 11-13*), in response to a gift sent him by friends:

"I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me."

It happens that most Americans now live in a state of magnificent abundance, in circumstances of great plenty. But this makes it neither easier nor harder for us to follow Jesus Christ. In wealth we run the risk of pride; in poverty we run the risk of covetousness. In Christ, personal possessions—too many or too few—become simply incidental; for we are then seeking no longer to conform to the popular version of the "good life" but to conform to the will of God revealed in Christ the Lord.

The Danger of Faith

The uncomfortable—literally, the uneasy—thing about Christian faith is that it requires one to live in the world and to use all its abundance without falling for its version of the worth-while life. For instance, a person invests in a little stock. His extra money will give him some share in corporation profits. If his investment program is kept up, he will have something with which to support a family partially in the future. It is a rational move. Soon, however, it turns out that, the first thing in the morning, he turns past the front page and the comic page, and even the sports page, to the financial section of the paper to check—casually, he insists to himself—on how his little investment is doing. Has the world insidiously taken him in?

Or take another example. A girl has had lots of uninteresting dates. Then a new man takes her out and shows some interest in her. She finds that he, also, seems unusually interesting. Around the office, let us say, she hears people commenting that he will be "heading for the top pretty fast." She begins to hear the faint ring of wedding bells and begins to have visions of a long, white wedding dress and of envious friends saying, "You're the luckiest kid!" She begins to dream—not seriously, she assures herself—of a future in a fine house that is filled with all the split-level finery and standard-sized children. She may also have a few thoughts about whether or not this man is the person to share life with "as long as we both shall live." But the dreams and visions, pauses and anticipations mingle, and it may be increasingly difficult for her to tell whether she has fallen for her man or has fallen for the popular version of the "good life," in which a man, although necessary, is actually rather incidental. Has the world insidiously taken her in, or has she really met the man with whom she can take all that the world may have to offer as God's useful gifts?

The Christian life is dangerous. God calls a Christian to live on the brink of disastrously idolizing the world. He is held back from falling only by the pull of the One he serves. He can live in this uneasy tension only because the real point of his life is to obey God. He is not here to make a big splash in the world and wrest his own glory from life, but to vindicate his Lord and give glory to God. In the *Christian Faith and Life* section (Unit II, Article 9) it is stated:

"This is the life . . . which will declare to the world that Jesus was right and that we were wrong. The heaven for which the Christians long is the heaven in which Jesus' earthly life will be acknowledged as the true human life and will be the image to which all of God's people are restored. . . . It is astounding how many of us—good church members—often hope for a salvation in which *our* true worth (by our own estimations, of course) is recognized by God or for one in which we are shown to be right and our enemies are shown to be wrong. But the Biblical hope is for a salvation in which Christ is declared to be the righteous One and God declared to be the One of worth."

A Band of Pilgrims

God calls Christians to live in this hope as obedient servants who are ready to wash the world's feet in the name of Jesus Christ their Lord. Their footing may at times be slippery; but they are not fundamentally jittery about being near the brink of the world. But, as in any other precarious pursuit, from skyscraper window-washing to mountain-climbing to skin-diving, the Christian vocation usually requires the teamwork of two or more persons. Christians are not supermen. A lonely pilgrim, following the precipitous truth all by himself way out in the world, is a weak brinksman. Obstacles that could be passed by a team are impassable for the lone pilgrim. Together they see and overcome the dangers lurking on the brink.

The church is the kind of fellowship in which the world's temptations and dangers are recognized and taken seriously. A counterfeit fellowship won't do. The church must be a group of people that allows its members to admit that they are caught and tempted by the idolatrous enticements of the "good life" promoted by modern society. People can't pretend that this world's dream and the Christian hope are identical or that they never make mistakes or that they never fall for the idols around them. If Christians have the chance openly to confess their mistakes and admit honestly that they are tempted to make gods out of their wealth and possessions, they are able to know their dangerous position. A church in which it is a strategic error to confess anything lulls its people into false security and puts them to a superman task.

A church may do things innocently that make it hard for people to live without submitting to the persuasive world of things. For example, surveys show that modern, well-designed church buildings will bring many people to the church. The people of the congre-

gation become proud of their new building and may be tempted to consider themselves "better" than Christians who have a dumpy building. Who could break away from slavery to material things in a church valued because "it's so nice and new"? The fellowship that supports the Christian in the fight at the brink must not itself be in the pit of submission to the beckoning world.

In the Name of Christ

It is dangerous to live really in the world. But Christians are called to obey the Creator of that world and to live bravely. Their bravery is not their own. They depend, in every moment, on the God who picks them up when they fall and on the community of fellow pilgrims who are in it together. They can knock about in the persuasive world without being bowled over so easily and with a remarkable power to recover when they do fall for a "fast line." They have come to see truly, by the Spirit of God, that "a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." It consists, rather, in the obedience of God's people serving the 168-hour-a-week world in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

UNIT II

The Bible and an American Novel

By H. Keith Beebe

1: BIBLICAL THEMES

AMERICANS have never been great readers, despite the flourishing publishing houses and massive sale of books. To be sure, in the past fifteen or twenty years there has been a general upswing in the number of books published, mostly because of the advent of paperbacks. But this does not mean that all America is reading. It may only mean that those who have always read books are now reading more.

Americans may read novels to fill their stock of stories or to appear well-read at parties or simply to entertain themselves. "Reading for relaxation" seems to be the most common attitude toward the novel. Some novels may be read this way, but they are not the "great and good literature" of our time. It is hard work to read a good novel (and thoroughly engrossing!) because the author has a serious word to convey to his readers. It may be that prophetic voices are speaking to the people of our age through the novel. Not all sermons have to be preached from a Christian pulpit.

Matchless Imagery

Some authors of America's best fiction make use of Biblical themes as well as of allusions (implied indications and indirect references) to Biblical materials. Modern readers may be puzzled by this or totally unaware of it. In an earlier day, men of letters in Western civilization used the Bible with its wealth of imagery because their readers knew and understood Biblical references to the ageless themes of man's life. But today authors cannot assume that their readers have a general knowledge of the Bible. Authors cannot assume that references or indirect allusions to Biblical themes, characters, and passages will easily or automatically illumine their meaning for their readers.

We must look, then, for other reasons why some American novelists use the Bible. If all of them were specifically Christian writers and were writing for a Christian public, it would be understandable that they should draw on the Bible. Or if it could be proved that they consider the Bible to be the Book of Books, this would be reason enough for their indebtedness to Biblical material. Neither of these is the case. Still, it may be that unless one reads the Bible while he is reading some of the best American novels he may be missing the heart of what the authors are trying to say.

Randall Jarrell described the unhappy condition of American readers in *The Saturday Evening Post* several years ago. In his article entitled "The Appalling Taste of the Age," he abhorred the "instant literature" of our commercial world, stating that most of what confronts us is neither literature nor truth. He said, in part: [1]

"Our century has produced some great and much good literature, but the habitual readers of Instant Literature cannot read it; nor can they read the great and good literature of the past. . . . A great deal of the knowledge educated—and many uneducated—people used to have in common has disappeared or is rapidly disappearing. Fairy tales, myths, history—the Bible, Shakespeare, Dickens, the Iliad—are, surprisingly often, things most of an audience won't understand an allusion to. These things were the ground on which the people of the past came together; much of the wit and charm or elevation of any writing or conversation with an atmosphere depends upon this presupposed, easily and affectionately remembered body of common knowledge."

Stating the same point, but from the outlook of a Bible scholar and preacher, Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote thirty-five years ago: [2]

[1] From *The Saturday Evening Post*, July 25, 1958. Used by permission.

[2] From *The Modern Use of the Bible*. Copyright, 1924, by Harry Emerson Fosdick. Reprinted, 1932, by The Macmillan Company.

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"Ignorance of [the Bible] constitutes a hopeless handicap in the endeavor to understand any great Western literature, and as for our English classics, take from them the contribution of the Scriptures and the remainder would resemble a town in Flanders after the big guns were through with it."

Here is an example from "great Western literature"—Milton's *Paradise Lost*. How many specific allusions to Biblical history can you catch?

After these appeared
A crew who, under names of old renown—
Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train—
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazed ox—
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equaled with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.

There are five Biblical events, places, and persons mentioned in those few lines. They confuse rather than enlighten the reader to whom the Biblical sources are unknown.

Modern literature also is filled with allusions to the Bible. What book of the Bible did John Steinbeck use when he wrote the following passage in *The Grapes of Wrath?* [3]

" 'How's it go, Tom?'

" 'Goes, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lif' up his fellow, but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up." That's part of her.'

" 'Go on,' Ma said. 'Go on, Tom.'

" 'Jus' a little bit more. "Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him, and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken." '

" 'An' that's Scripture?'

" 'Casy said it was. Called it the Preacher.' "

In the following lines William Faulkner uses an image from the Bible which, to understanding readers, makes his style vigorous and vivid, so entirely clear and full of meaning that he would be less an artist, less readable, if he did not call out such matchless imagery from Biblical sources:

"A one-room-and-leanto cabin, a hovel almost, clinging paintless to a sheer pitch of mountainside in a straggling patch of corn standing in niggard monument to the incredible, the not just back- but heart-breaking labor which each meager stalk represented: moloch-effigy of self-sustenance which did not reward man's sweat but merely consumed his flesh." [4]

Prophetic Insights

In addition to literary allusions to Biblical sources, some American novelists find thematic material in the Bible that gives both moral and literary power to their criticisms of modern culture. This does not mean that the authors are Christian writers or that their purposes are identical with Christian purposes. It may be, however, that they are often closer to the Biblical view of life than much that passes under the name of Christianity. These men are highly critical of sentimental piety, of the belief that business success is a sure sign of God's blessing, of the belief that social position and prestige are always the results of hard work and honesty, and of the belief that morality is equated with the series of *don'ts* proposed by some brands of Christianity.

For instance, a moral concern that agitates Christians today was expressed by the most sensitive Biblical writers: Is man free to direct his own life or is his life determined by forces outside his own will? Jeremiah, for example, believed that man is a peculiar combination of freedom and determinism. As a prophet, he felt compelled to preach the word of God he had received—that the destruction of Jerusalem was imminent because the nation was guilty of idolatry and injustice. He was *bound* to proclaim God's truth, but he did not *want* to do it. He was, paradoxically, free to reject God's message at the same time that he felt compelled to preach it. As recorded in *Jer. 20: 7, 9, 14, 18,* he said:

"O Lord, thou hast deceived me,
and I was deceived;
thou art stronger than I,
and thou hast prevailed.
I have become a laughingstock all the day;
everyone mocks me. . . .
If I say, 'I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,'
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire
shut up in my bones,
and I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot. . . .
Cursed be the day
on which I was born!
The day when my mother bore me,
let it not be blessed! . . .
Why did I come forth from the womb
to see toil and sorrow,
and spend my days in shame?"

[3] Copyright, 1939, by John Steinbeck. A Viking Compass Book, 1958. Used by permission of The Viking Press, Inc.

[4] From *A Fable*, by William Faulkner. © 1950, 1954, by William Faulkner. Used by permission of Random House, Inc.

Jeremiah believed that he was independent and free, but at the same time bound by restrictions and compulsions over which he had no control.

The present American sentiment seems to prefer to make extravagant claims for freedom or else to believe that man's actions are completely forced on him from outside. The human demand that man should be absolutely free is contained in the classical story of the search for the "fountain of youth." According to this view of life, man is free by nature and he needs only to discover the secret of absolute freedom. Some Christians make these extravagant claims too. Technological advancement may, in fact, be partially the result of the human psychological drive to claim that man is born for freedom only. If we can control nature sufficiently, according to this attitude, then we shall have proved that man is basically free and unlimited.

Freudian psychology, on the other hand, insists that man is so completely determined by his childhood experiences that only complete analysis will free him from his past. Even those who reject the confinement of Freud's sexual theories often cling to the belief that man is determined by the experiences of early childhood to the extent that there is no freedom of the will, nothing to alleviate the ceaseless rounds of a completely controlled existence.

John Steinbeck faces this problem as directly as Jeremiah did 2,500 years ago. In his novel *The Grapes of Wrath,* he penetrates to the truth of the human condition by pointing out that man is a complexity of freedom and bondage and that, because this is our nature, we ought to accept these facts and try to live well within them. He tells us that Tom Joad had been sent to the state penitentiary at McAlester, Oklahoma, for having killed a man in a fight. Convicted of manslaughter, Tom was paroled for good behavior after a few years. On his way back to the farm, he met Casy, the local "hell, fire, and brimstone" preacher, and they rested together in the shade of a tree waiting for the cool evening. Steinbeck continues:

"'How they treat you in McAlester?' Casy asked.

"'Oh, awright. You eat regular, an' get clean clothes, and there's places to take a bath. It's pretty nice some ways. Makes it hard not havin' no women.' Suddenly he laughed. 'They was a guy paroled,' he said. ' 'Bout a month he's back for breakin' parole. A guy ast him why he bust his parole. "Well, hell," he says. "They got no conveniences at my old man's place. Got no 'lectric lights, got no shower baths. There ain't no books, an' the food's lousy." Says he come back where they got a few conveniences an' he eats regular. He says it makes him feel lonesome out there in the open havin' to think what to do next. So he stole a car an' come back.' Joad got out his tobacco and blew a brown paper free of the pack and rolled a cigarette. 'The guy's right, too,' he said. 'Las' night, thinkin' where I'm gonna sleep, I got scared. An' I got thinkin' about my bunk, an' I wonder what the stir-bug I got for a cell mate is doin'. Me an' some guys had a strang band goin'. Good one. Guy said we ought to go on the radio. An' this morning I didn't know what time to get up. Jus' laid there waitin' for the bell to go off.'"[3]

In this humorous story, Steinbeck seriously shows how man both longs for freedom and craves to be cuddled. He wishes he were wild, without restraints of culture, but at the same time he feels uncomfortable, remote, lost, without those experiences of life which give him assurance. Like Jeremiah, Steinbeck honestly recognizes, in *The Grapes of Wrath,* that man's extravagant claims of freedom are groundless and that his need to be fully controlled can never be satisfied. Jeremiah and Steinbeck agree that man is both determined by the limitations placed upon him by his Creator and free to satisfy his basic urges by the exercise of intelligence and will.

The Elements of Real Life

When a reader takes the Bible seriously, he finds a depth of penetration into the soul of man that is starkly realistic. Likewise, when an author employs Biblical themes and allusions seriously, his work will reveal a deep probing of man and his culture. In *The Adventures of Augie March,* which will be discussed in the following articles of this unit, Saul Bellow uses plots involving sexual aberrations, thievery, dishonor, and social strife—elements of real life that dig deeply below the surface of human experience. Basing his work on Biblical themes and allusions, Bellow describes human nature in a way that says "No" to those who see man as merely good, as needing only a gentle prod to make him better.

2: THE LITERARY USE OF THE BIBLE

THE most important novel by Saul Bellow is *The Adventures of Augie March.*[1] As a person reads this serious fiction he should ask himself the question, "Is Mr. Bellow simply showing his erudition by using numerous Biblical allusions, or does he by this means support his purposes?" The use of Biblical material also in his shorter novels—*The Victim* (The Viking Press, 1947) and *Seize the Day* (The Viking Press, 1956)—seems to indicate that Saul Bellow purposefully and consciously chooses Biblical themes and expressions.

[1] Copyright, 1949, 1951, 1952, 1953, by Saul Bellow. All quotations in this and subsequent articles are used by permission of the publishers, The Viking Press, Inc. Paperback edition, 1960; $1.75.

The Common Ground

Some arithmetic might show that Bellow has deliberately depended upon Biblical material for this novel. The book contains forty specific references to persons or events from the Old and New Testaments. More than ten other passages are soundly Biblical in content and disclose that the author's mind is steeped in Biblical literature and theology. When I tabulated these passages according to types of literature, I found seventeen references to Biblical myth and legend, nine allusions to historical narrative, nine to the Gospels, three to the Prophets, one to the Apocalypse, and one to the Apocrypha.

Arithmetic isn't particularly convincing when talking about art. Here is what Bellow has to say for himself: In a review of *The Adventures of Mottel, the Cantor's Son,* by Shalom Aleichem, Bellow says: "The most ordinary Yiddish conversation is full of the grandest historical, mythological, and religious allusions, the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, Egypt, Alexander, Titus. . . . The sages and the Laws may get into the discussion of an egg, a clothesline, or a pair of pants." [2]

If Bellow had been speaking of his own novel, he could not have stated the situation more exactly. He reports that when Augie was a boy, he went to live with a cousin during the summers. Augie says:

"Anna did not object to our going [to the movies on the Sabbath], but she herself wouldn't touch money on holy days. She observed them all, including the new moons, from a little Hebrew calendar, covering her head, lighting candles, and whispering prayers, with her eyes dilated and determined, going after religious terrors with the fear and nerve of a Jonah driven to enter frightful Nineveh. She thought it was her duty while I was in her house to give me some religious instruction, and it was a queer account I got from her of the Creation and Fall, the building of Babel, the Flood, the visit of the angels to Lot, the punishment of his wife and the lewdness of his daughters, in a spout of Hebrew, Yiddish, and English, powered by piety and anger, little flowers and bloody fires supplied from her own memory and fancy."

Because of Saul Bellow's Biblical learning, it is not surprising that such comment should come from Augie, Saul Bellow's hero.

Augie grew up in Chicago. Whether he was illegitimate or simply the second son of a neglectful father, Saul Bellow never really lets us know. Augie's father took no part in Augie's life, and his mother was half-blind, leaving the alleys of Chicago open territory for Augie's adventures. From his first indoctrination into the covert ways of securing charity under the tutelage of Grandma Lausch to his operations on the European black market, we never really know where Augie stands. As a fifteen-year-old pocketer of quarters in a Christmas toy shop, as an innocent accomplice in armed robbery, as partner of an immigrant-runner across the Canadian border, as gigolo to a wealthy frustrated Evanston matron, as trainer of an American eagle coached to track down the Mexican iguana, as the only friend in an awkward attempt at abortion, or as pharmacist mate aboard a merchant ship in World War II, Augie's character was his fate.

After reading about a few of Augie's adventures, one might question the wisdom of reading the book. If I had been moved to accept the opinion expressed by the reviewer in *Newsweek,* who summarily dis-

missed the novel as "facetious and of inconsequence," I would have given up all hope of finding serious use of the Bible by this novelist. But after reading the criticisms by Robert Penn Warren and Arthur Mizener, I persisted in thinking that Saul Bellow had much to say that is dependent upon a Biblical view of life and seriously descriptive of American culture. It seems to me that Bellow, in writing a good novel, depended in part at least upon the common ground of familiar literature discoverable in the Bible.

Literary Tastes

Why does Bellow use Biblical allusions in his novels? A reader might find one answer to this question in the conclusion that Bellow has drawn upon the Bible because it has suited his literary tastes and it expresses his meanings artistically. Here are some illustrations of this point:

Augie March was employed by the crippled Einhorn, a Chicago financial impressario. Augie was thrown into intimate contact with the Einhorn family because the business was conducted from an office in the home. Arthur, Einhorn's only son, was away at college and hadn't taken an interest in the business. Mrs. Einhorn, jealous for her "elegant and cultivated son," was wary of Augie. Augie observed, "While Mrs. Einhorn was a kindly woman ordinarily, now and

[2] From *Saturday Review,* May 30, 1953.

again she gave me a glance that suggested Sarah and the son of Hagar."

Grandma Lausch is one of the unforgettable characters in the novel. A Crimean Jew, she lived in the midst of Chicago slums as she had lived on the shores of the Black Sea. Haughty, distinguished, proud of lineage and endowments, she ruled the March family as she might have ruled her own in happier days. When Augie and his brother Simon failed to measure up to her personal mixture of high ethics and cunning deceit, they were thoroughly reprimanded at the dinner table. "It was great for her to make us take a long swig of her mixture of reality and to watch the effect come up sober in our eyes." When the boys made mistakes, and then in Grandma Lausch's eyes refused to see where the mistakes were leading, she reminded them of the terrible consequences, "similar to Elisha's bear that rushed on the children who were taunting him; or the divine blow that cracked down that Jew so thoughtless as to put out a hand to keep the Ark of the Covenant from falling off the wagon."

In one of his unbelievable adventures Augie was working for a labor-union organizer. He answered an emergency call from the union of hotel chambermaids. Augie eloquently pleaded for an election to decide jurisdiction between his union and the AFL. He had just completed his stirring speech when an AFL goon squad broke up the meeting and broke up Augie too. The chambermaids held the goon squad at bay while Augie scampered down the back stairway, into the Chicago traffic with a thug on his trail, in and out of a streetcar and, finally, into the protection of a movie house with a Garbo picture. Out of danger for a while, Augie thought, "I was anyway beginning to feel that if he trapped me now it might be dangerous for him too, as for the overseer killed by Moses."

Augie embarked on his great wandering to Mexico with Thea Fenchel to get her divorce and to train an American eagle to catch giant lizards for sale to zoos. Augie made a final visit to Mama at the home.

"It was easy to explain my going off to Mama. Of course I didn't have to tell her much, only that I was engaged to a young lady who had to go to Mexico, and that I was going too. . . .

"'Well, then don't let her make you unhappy, Augie,' she said. . . . I said nothing of the hunting to her, but it did occur to me how it was inevitable for the son of a Hagar to go chase wild animals at one time or another."

These are a few examples of how Bellow has used Biblical events and characters to allude to the situation in which he places Augie. The novelist's knowledge of the Bible is shown by his capacity to call upon favorite stories to enhance his own writing. The novel would be less complete, less artistic, less readable without this common ground of familiar literature.

3: SYMBOLISM IN THE NOVEL

The manner in which Saul Bellow uses Biblical allusions to enhance his literary style is neither complex nor difficult. The serious reader merely needs to know the Bible from cover to cover in order to keep alert to all of Bellow's meanings. However, when the reader makes a more detailed analysis of *The Adventures of Augie March,* he finds that Bellow has plunged him into the intricacies of Biblical history and theology.

Exodus and Wandering

In a subtle and complex fashion the author has depended upon a substratum of Biblical narrative that gives symbolic meaning to his novel. Here is some evidence to show for it:

Augie's fortunes never ran high. He survived the tenements of Chicago by using his wits. He finally became independent of charity, finished high school, and stumbled into a job selling sporting goods. He became the constant companion of Mrs. Renling, the wife of the store owner. When she offered to adopt him, Augie realized that his bondage to Mrs. Renling was likely to be forever. He ditched her and took to selling bathroom paint to cheap Chicago hotels, at which he was spectacularly unsuccessful. Short of money, he met Joe Gorman and decided to help Joe run a few immigrants across the Canadian border into New York State. He was promised fifty dollars for the job of driving the car, not aware that it was "hot." With police closing in, Joe and Augie abandoned the car and separated. Augie then began his laborious journey back to Chicago on his ten-dollar advance pay. He had reached the abysmal low point of his fortunes. Hitchhiking, riding the rails, a night in jail, in company with road bums and homosexuals, he finally arrived in Chicago. As he slouched down the street, he passed the synagogue.

"People were coming out in new coats and business hats, with square velvet envelopes for their prayer things. It was the first night of Passover, of the Angel of Death going through all doors not marked with blood to take away the life of the Egyptian first-born, and then the Jews trooping into the desert. I wasn't permitted to pass by; I was stopped . . . as I got into the street to walk around the crowd."

That Passover evening seemed to be the turning point in Augie's adventures. He had just gone back home where, despite Grandma Lausch's harshness, he

would have been received. But when he knocked on the tenement door, a strange woman appeared. His mother had been dislodged from the old flat, and Grandma Lausch had died! All that bound him to the past was gone. With the comfortable tyranny of Grandma Lausch no longer holding him, and freed suddenly from responsibility to his half-blind mother, he felt suspended between sweet freedom and the old tyranny. Having been enslaved by no fault of his own, and having suffered deep personal reverses, he now began a life of wandering.

Augie's new life began as assistant to a dog manicurist. He reeked of dog and disinfectant so that people on the buses and subways moved away from him. But he left this for stealing books which he sold in turn to scholars at the university. Then his brother Simon hired him to work in the coal yard that was Simon's dowry for marrying the unmarriageable Charlotte Magnus. Augie met and courted the wealthy Lucy Magnus, wandered through a friend's attempted abortion, a hapless try at the university, and a rugged season as a union organizer. And so, from the depths of absolute depression, he started a slow quest toward better things.

The Promised Land

Then Augie fell blissfully, wildly, insensibly in love. Thea Fenchel had tried to seduce him when he was Mrs. Renling's traveling companion. He had lost track of her for several years, until she appeared in Chicago searching for him with the invitation to love her and to take her to Mexico where she would secure a divorce from her millionaire husband. A beautiful and unpredictable creature, Thea completely captivated Augie. She gave herself to him with no obvious intention of requiring love or responsibility in return. Augie, who never before had been loved, submitted to Thea's sweet domination and agreed to help her train a bald eagle for hunting lizards in Mexico.

Before scurrying off to Mexico, Augie took leave of his few friends, hoping they would wish him well. Instead: "Everybody warned me, in some way . . . . I argued back to myself that it was just the Rio Grande I had to cross, not the Acheron, but anyway it oppressed me from somewhere." He plunged into more adventure, across a forbidden river, into the meshes of a new and subtle tyranny. Augie, not Thea, became the eagle's keeper. Augie, not Thea, subdued and trained the eagle to hunt. Augie, not Thea, gave the cowardly eagle a second chance when, after it had been bitten on the leg by a lizard, it refused to hunt. Augie was deserted by Thea, which nearly resulted in his moral annihilation.

I think that the wandering of Augie March is worked out as the sequel of that Passover night; and his loss of freedom when crossing a river into a plenteous but dangerous land had something of the same character as the experience of the people of Israel when they found themselves captivated by the voluptuous beauty and productivity of a delightful tyranny in Canaan. Of course, it is impossible to draw a precise analogy at every point in Augie's career; but I have come to the conclusion that Saul Bellow has followed the classic pattern of bondage to freedom, the traditional recital of conflict between the austere morality of a simple culture and the inevitable evil bound up with beauty, complex strivings, and submission to subtle tyranny—the classic pattern found in Israel's history of exodus, wandering, conquest, and being conquered.

4: THE NOVELIST'S MORAL CONCERNS

Novelists as well as preachers and theologians are anxious about the course of American culture. In reality, anyone who thinks deeply on social issues and reveals his thoughts in conversation or in print expresses a moral concern. The finest thinkers, although not oblivious to the small issues we so often refer to as our personal ethics, are really engrossed in the broader problems of man's place in culture. Many cultural problems are seated in moral issues. For instance, what direction is civilization taking? Is it in the throes of a death struggle? Is it progressing ever surely toward perfection? Has it reached its height? Is civilization now bound to level into a plateau of mediocrity?

Others in our culture are more keenly interested in the place of an individual in circumstances that are overwhelming in their complexity. Can a person truly be himself in a culture that despises privacy? Can a man be whole when so many around him are ill? Can a person exist when public and private institutions swallow him up in their organization schemes? Mature and serious novels probe into such questions as these.

The study of Saul Bellow's literary and thematic use of the Bible is prelude to the task of discovering his moral concerns about contemporary American culture. Saul Bellow has used Biblical allusions to enhance his artistic style. He has used Biblical narrative to undergird and interpret Augie's adventures. He has chosen symbolic Biblical actions to deepen the "ambiguity, paradox, and irony of his serious fiction." But it is most important to discover if Bellow's moral concerns are essentially Biblical in their orientation.

Bondage of Strangeness

Bellow's principal moral concern, it seems to me, is to deny "that it is so very bad to be what we are or that we are born to be condemned with the times." He states this idea in a review of Joyce Cary's *Except*

the Lord, and it is as applicable to his own work. He wrote:

"Liberal, humanistic, it accepts the contemporary, it defends the possibilities of the man of the present, denies that it is so very bad to be what we are or that we are born to be condemned with the times. It asserts that there are powerful and original natures to be found still, that genius exists, that striving is not necessarily monomania, happiness not extinct, hope not unjustified." [1]

Bellow willingly admits that life is cluttered up with the contingencies of normal existence, and he recognizes that man is really a pilgrim and a citizen of two worlds. Augie said: "Anyway, I would have preferred to stay in the States and have children. Instead I'm in the bondage of strangeness for a time still. It's only temporary. We'll get out of it." But despite man's bondage to the "clutter of contingencies," there lies within him that "striving . . . not necessarily monomania, . . . hope not unjustified," in which man rises above his bondage.

This point is enriched by the pathetic story of the old Piedmontese lady who wished to guide Augie through the intricacies of the Ghiberti sculptures. Of distinguished family, kicked about by the Nazis, deprived of home by the Italians, without kin or kind, she faced the cruelty of nature and mankind with defiant hope. In Augie's words:

"I said to her, 'I don't want a guide. I understand how it is, but what do you want me to do? People are coming up to me all the time. So why don't you please take this money and—' I was beginning to be in pain over it.

" 'People! But I am not other people. You should realize that. I am—' and she was voice-stopped, she was so angry. 'This is happening to *me!*' she said. . . .

"This ancient lady was right too, and there always is a *me* it happens to. Death is going to take the boundaries away from us, that we should no more be persons. That's what death is about. When that is what life also wants to be about, how can you feel except rebellious?"

Man to be himself is rebellious, always caught in a "bondage of strangeness," but he never willingly accepts his lot.

The Futility of Self-Salvation

A second of Bellow's concerns is to show that knowledge and ingenuity are not enough to extricate man from his bondage. He suggests how several possibilities of saving man by human resources always intrigue us. For instance, Basteshaw, who drifted with Augie in a lifeboat, tried to force Augie to forego rescue by a ship so that they could drift with the current to the Canaries where, in a laboratory, he could continue his research in creating life. Basteshaw insisted that he had successfully created life in the laboratory, had some of it aboard when the ship was torpedoed, and that it was adrift in the sea. Basteshaw was thoroughly convinced of the ultimate value of his scientific discoveries:

"Every man will be a poet and every woman a saint. Love will fill the world. Injustice will go, and slavery, bloodshed, cruelty. . . . And then a new brotherhood of man will begin. . . . I am going to create a serum —a serum like a new River Jordan. With respect to which I will be a Moses. And you Joshua. To lead an Israel consisting of the entire human race across it."

Manuel Padilla, the Mexican mathematics genius, solved the problem of escaping from his bondage. His solution was to do only the things that one liked to do and never to become involved in duty. Augie asked him one evening why he went to bed so early.

"He said, 'I have to get some sleep. I have a quiz first thing in the morning.'

" 'Are you ready for it, Manny?'

"He said, 'Either this stuff comes easy or it doesn't come at all.'

"And that stayed with me. Therefore I was thinking on the streetcar. Of course! Easily or not at all. People were mad to be knocking themselves out over difficulties because they thought difficulty was a sign of the right thing. So I decided to try this out and, to begin with, to experiment with book stealing. . . . I I didn't mean to settle down to a career of stealing even if it were to come easy, but only to give myself a start at something better."

Again, some think it is by much learning, mixed with subtle sophistication, extravagant cosmopolitan living, and the arrogance of the emancipated mind, that man finds his freedom. Augie met Hooker Frazer in Paris. Augie tells us:

"He was feeling very grand, the place inspired him, and he sat down and gave me a sort of talk—pretty amazing!—about Paris and how nothing like it existed, the capital of the hope that Man could be free without the help of gods, clear of mind, civilized, wise, pleasant, and all of that."

And so, after many adventures with brainy people, Augie concluded that there is no salvation through the techniques of science or escape from duty or wistful glances into the future, or by means of vast learning. Augie said:

"I thought if I knew more my problem would be simplified, and maybe I should complete my formal

[1] From *The New Republic,* February 22, 1954.

education. But since I've been working for Robey I have reached the conclusion that I couldn't utilize even 10 per cent of what I already knew. . . . Take the Gospels. How are you supposed to put them to use? Why, they're not utilizable! And then you go and pile on top of that more advice and information. . . . Why, just as a question of time spent in getting prepared for life, look! a man could spend forty, fifty, sixty years like that inside the walls of his own being. And all great experience would only take place within the walls of his being. . . . And all achievement would stay within those walls. And all glamour too. And even hate . . . . This would be only a terrible, hideous dream about existing. It's better to dig ditches and hit other guys with your shovel than die in the walls."

Acceptance of Creatureliness

Another of Bellow's moral concerns is to indicate that despite man's alienation from nature in his technical civilization, his fundamental existence is dependent upon and close to nature which is fundamentally moral. Augie said:

"I have a feeling . . . about the axial lines of life, with respect to which you must be straight or else your existence is merely clownery, hiding tragedy. I must have had a feeling since I was a kid about these axial lines which made me want to have my existence on them . . . . But lately I have felt these thrilling lines again. When striving stops, there they are as a gift. . . . Truth, love, peace, bounty, usefulness, harmony! . . . At any time life can come together again and man be regenerated, and doesn't have to be a god or public servant like Osiris who gets torn apart annually for the sake of the common prosperity, but the man himself, finite and taped as he is, can still come where the axial lines are."

Augie argued that possession of the feeling for those axial lines would drive him back to the land. Augie thought he would find a bit of farm land in Illinois or Indiana, settle down, raise a family, and open a school for boys and girls who had "had it rough."

Augie had traveled from experience to philosophy and knew that in the end he could be himself only by being possessed by the land. But this never happened. In the book his adventures ended in the European black market, but the truth about man's existence was not hidden from him. Of his farm and foster-home idea, he admitted:

"I didn't have the least idea of how to go about it. And of course it was only one of those bubble-headed dreams of people who haven't yet realized what they're like nor what they're intended for. . . . Now my foster-home and academy dream was not a preoccupation but one of those featherhead millenarian notions or summer butterflies. You should never try to cook such butterflies in lard. So to speak."

Basic Biblical Insight

In most respects Protestant Christianity concerns itself with moral issues that are narrower in scope than those handled by Saul Bellow. So much concern is spent on the morality of adventures such as Augie went through that there is no time for concern over the deeper sources of cultural irritation. Whereas American Protestantism lays great stress on respectability, Saul Bellow finds that the discovery of one's "real" self is more pressing. Whereas much of Protestantism stresses a sentimental piety about man's relationship with his fellow man, Bellow insists that correct relationships will follow when a man accepts himself as the limited creature he is. Social position and prestige are highly honored in our culture, but Augie never had either, and yet found his basic self when he stopped striving to be what he was not. The conclusion of the matter, it seems to me, is that Bellow knows and appreciates and is preaching a sound doctrine of cultural and individual salvation that is basically Biblical in its origin. It differs from much of modern Protestantism because Protestantism has strayed too far afield from the Bible.

UNIT III

The Long Wait

By Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr.

1: A HALF-MILLENNIAL VACUUM

WHAT happened between Malachi and Matthew? The question is stated awkwardly; but then, on rare occasions, a person *feels* awkward about his ignorance. For instance, it was recently reported somewhere that a pleasant lady at a formal dinner was seated between a Christian theologian and a Jewish rabbi and, during an embarrassing lull in the conversation, remarked, "I feel like the page between the Old Testament and the New." Both of the gentlemen turned to her coolly and replied, "That page, Madam, is a blank."

This wildly hilarious repartee may serve to make the point with which we are here concerned: the knowledge that most people in the church have of what is designated the inter-Testament period consists

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of a few vague and unrelated shadows scattered across half a millennium. Most people have at least a sketchy grasp of the events reported in the Old Testament and a thumbnail view of those described in the New Testament; but between the sketch and the thumbnail lies a near vacuum of something like four to five hundred years, about which they know practically nothing that would appear to be important.

The period of ignorance may begin after Judah's exile and the last great prophets—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah—in the sixth century B.C., or a generation or two later, when the Jews returned from exile and rebuilt the Temple. Something may even be known about Nehemiah and Ezra, in the fifth century and the early fourth. But what happened between about 400 B.C. and the birth of Jesus? Four hundred years is a long time! So is even half of that: two hundred years ago there was no United States of America!

When we study the New Testament, we are apt to assume that the background against which it is to be read and interpreted is simply the Old Testament. However, the *immediate* background in relation to which we must try to understand the climate of New Testament times is the period of the "lost years" of our study. As we cannot hope to understand modern Protestantism simply against the background of the Reformation, or Calvin Coolidge simply against the background of the Revolutionary War, so we cannot hope to understand the early church simply in terms of the Old Testament.

There are two primary reasons for our general ignorance of the history, faith, and piety of the Jewish people in the period leading up to and including the first century. In the first place, the Old Testament leaves off (with a few brief exceptions) more than a century and a half before Jesus' birth; and in the second place, Protestantism as a whole has not been even so interested as it should have been in the post-exilic Judaism that *is* reflected in the Old Testament. Far too often, Protestant study of the Old Testament ends with the prophets of the exile—over five hundred years before Christ. Thus we need to fill in some of the wide-open spaces separating the Old Testament from the New.

Before Alexander Was Great

One of the decisive turning points, not only in the history of Israel but also in the history of the whole Western world, was the successful military campaigns of Alexander the Great. It was in 333 B.C., at the battle of Issus, that the vast Persian empire, which included little Palestine, passed over into the hands of the Greeks. How big had the Persian empire been? How had it been related to the history of the Jews? Here is some Old Testament history:

At the death of Solomon, toward the end of the tenth century B.C., the Hebrew kingdom was divided into two parts—Northern and Southern. Two centuries later, the Northern Kingdom was annihilated by the Assyrians, leaving only the Southern Kingdom, often called Judah. This small kingdom of Judah survived for another century and a half, during which time the Babylonians conquered the Assyrians and became masters of the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys. In 587 B.C., the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, the king, plundered Judah, destroyed its capital, Jerusalem, and took the leading citizens of Judah into exile. Thus the Southern Kingdom became a province of Babylonia. There was then no Jewish nation in the world; there were only dispersed Jews scattered throughout the Babylonian empire.

Revival of Hope

But many of the Jews who were taken into exile did not quickly forget their land, which had been promised them by God, or their Temple, which now lay in ruins. They could not be happy in Babylon. *Psalm 137* reflects the mood of many Jews:

"By the waters of Babylon,
there we sat down and wept,
when we remembered Zion. . . .

How shall we sing the Lord's song
in a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy!"

Many Jews, like this psalmist, could not rest content until the day when God would prepare a way for them to return to their land and to their worship in a new and glorious Temple. In *Isa. 40: 3-5,* for example, this hope is proclaimed:

"A voice cries:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' "

Many Jews in exile believed that "the glory of the Lord [would] be revealed, and all flesh [would] see it together," when God made a highway across the desert from Babylon to Jerusalem, over which his chosen ones would return home.

Less than fifty years after the Babylonians attempted to exterminate the Jews, the situation changed. A Persian by the name of Cyrus, who had made himself king of the Medes, conquered Babylon

in 539 B.C. and became the ruler of the Near East. Babylon, the world's oldest city, had stood from the beginning of recorded history; now it passed into the hands of the Persians—a totally foreign, non-Semitic people. The Persian empire then encompassed nearly the whole of the civilized East—from India, across Asia Minor as far as Greece on the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and down through Palestine and across North Africa on the southern shore.

Survival of the Faith

After 539 the Jews were subject to the Persians, who were quite willing that such Jews as wanted to should return to their homeland and practice their piety as they wished. Many Jews made the long trip back to the land that had been promised them. There they found desolate wastes and the Temple destroyed. In September of 520 B.C., "they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God" (*Hag. 1: 14*), and in four years they had finished the rebuilding of the Temple. About seventy years later, they rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem in fifty-two days (*Neh. 6: 15*).

But it was very difficult for the people to maintain their separate, independent existence as Jews. A few orthodox Jews feared that the people might be assimilated and that following such assimilation Judaism would perish. Thanks, however, to the extraordinary leadership of such men as Nehemiah and Ezra, the small Jewish community in Palestine preserved its identity. Nehemiah and Ezra saw clearly that, if the faith were to survive, the Jewish people would have to understand themselves as a distinct group and would have to set up barriers between themselves and all other peoples. Without barriers assimilation would have been inevitable. The survival of the Jewish community in the world was due to the "conservative" and isolating policies inaugurated during the Persian period of Jewish history. The Jews became a people of the synagogue. They learned from childhood that their first duty and highest joy was to be found in obedience to all the commandments written in the law. The peculiar character of the Pharisaic Judaism of Jesus' time had its origin in the "orthodox" Jewish leaders of the fifth and early fourth centuries before Christ.

2: THE GREEK TIDE

In the year 539 B.C., Cyrus the Great, king of the Medes, had marched into Babylon without a battle. Fourteen years later, in 525, his son, Cambyses, claimed Egypt; and the Persian empire extended from India to Greece. But it did not include Greece—then, or ever. The enormously powerful armies and navies of the Persians never were able to incorporate that strategic peninsula into the empire. On two notable occasions the Persians went to great lengths in attempting to add Greece to their domain, but both times they were defeated. Darius I (the Great) was defeated at Marathon in 490 B.C, and Xerxes I lost the naval battle off Salamis ten years later.

The Boy Wonder

The Greeks had had a uniquely significant history. They were a people of special intellectual and artistic gifts, but they also had great civic interests that issued in the formation of the Greek city-states. They had an unusually strong navy and were able to defend themselves in the face of any power Persia could bring against them. But they were not satisfied with the *status quo*. They themselves were interested in expanding eastward into the Persian empire. They wanted their culture to penetrate beyond the confines of their own small territory. Under Philip of Macedon, the so-called Hellenic League was formed, which, after 338 B.C., included all the Greek city-states except intransigent Sparta. Philip had intended to invade Persia, but he was murdered in 336. Therefore, this major enterprise fell to his son, Alexander.

Alexander the Great was born in Pella in 356 and as a youth was instructed by the philosopher Aristotle. At the age of twenty, upon the assassination of his father, Alexander quickly eliminated all rivals to his father's authority; and two years later, in the spring of 334, he crossed the Hellespont into Asia Minor. There, at the River Granicus, he attacked and defeated a contingent of the Persian army. Following this victory, state after state in Asia Minor capitulated to his forces. So as not to leave any undefeated enemy at his rear, Alexander turned south at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea before proceeding farther eastward. At Issus, on the northeast corner of the sea, he met the Persian emperor himself—Darius III—and half a million men. He defeated Darius in 333, and then turned south toward Palestine and Egypt. Strongly fortified Tyre succeeded in resisting for seven months, but was finally compelled to yield to superior power in 332. Alexander marched through Palestine and then into Egypt, where he was welcomed as a deliverer from Persian rule. He continued westward across North Africa, as far as Cyrene. Being in full command of the coasts, he was master of the sea.

Alexander then retraced his steps eastward and north through Palestine, heading for Babylon. When he had crossed the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, he was met by Darius III again. It has been estimated that Darius was waiting for him with about a million men; but at the battle of Gaugamela, in 331, Darius was utterly defeated, and his whole empire passed into the hands of the unconquerable Macedonian.

But Alexander was not through. He proceeded south to Babylon, which surrendered immediately, and then

headed east. He wanted to unite the East with the West in one great empire. He crossed the Indus River in India, but soon his troops refused to go farther. So Alexander turned toward home in 325 B.C., and two years later, died in Babylon.

Many cities, inhabited by veterans of the Greek army, were settled all across the empire. Through these cities Greece exerted its influence across the Near East as far as India. Greek language, Greek art and architecture, Greek sports, Greek philosophy and religion—the whole of Greek culture—began to penetrate the vast territory conquered by Alexander. The Hellenization (or impregnating with Greek culture) of the whole of the Near East, including Palestine and its neighboring states, had begun. The implications of this Hellenization for Jewish faith were not yet dreamed of.

Theft of an Empire

Alexander had died very young and very unexpectedly. As he left no heir, his death initiated a scramble on the part of the generals of his army to grab for themselves what they could get away with. The Near East was not to know any long-sustained peace until the Romans came and established the Pax Romana nearly two hundred years later. But this is to get ahead of the story. What happened immediately after Alexander's death? The first successful steal was that of Ptolemy Lagi, who emerged very quickly in possession of Egypt, Palestine, and southern Syria to a point just south of Damascus. Ptolemy founded the so-called Ptolemaic dynasty.

Shortly thereafter, in 312, Seleucus, another of Alexander's generals, finally succeeded in wresting for himself northern Syria and the eastern (and major) part of the empire. These and other parts into which Alexander's empire was split were almost continually at war with one another. There were secessions and new dynasties set up; but we are now interested in the Ptolemies of Egypt, for Palestine fell immediately under their control.

The Ptolemy kings were not strongly bent on Hellenizing the Jews and allowed them freedom to live as Jews. Of course, the Jews looked forward to the day when they would again be politically independent, owning the land that God had given them. But by the early years of the third century B.C. they had not known political autonomy for three hundred years, and the political question was presumably not a pressing one. Alexander's army had come and gone. The Jews enjoyed a century of relative peace.

The Old Testament in Greek

After 300 B.C. many pagans were converted to Judaism. These conversions were not due entirely to vigorous proseletyzing on the part of the Jews. There were, however, colonies of Jews in many Greek cities, and many Jews emphasized elements of their faith that attracted non-Jews—especially Jewish monotheism, Jewish ethics, and Jewish teaching on judgment and salvation. So pagans began to be interested in Judaism.

Along with this, an accompanying development of great importance took place under the Ptolemies. Jews living outside Palestine began, quite naturally, to adopt the Greek language, which was commonly spoken throughout the civilized Near East. And so it became increasingly difficult for many Jews born and brought up in Greek cities to understand their Scriptures written in Hebrew. A Greek translation of the Old Testament became a necessity. Such a translation of the law was begun in Alexandria around 250 B.C., and the rest of the Old Testament was translated into Greek by about 100 B.C. This Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament has become known as the Septuagint (from the Latin for "seventy") and is sometimes written LXX. The name "Septuagint" stems from the tradition that the translation of the first portion was made by seventy (or seventy-two) Jewish elders. It was believed that these seventy elders had gone down from Jerusalem to Egypt especially to prepare the Greek translation. The Septuagint, rather than the Hebrew Old Testament, was the Bible of the early church; hence its influence on Christian thought has been very great indeed.

The Latest Writings

We should note, finally, that the Jews were very productive in a literary way during the time the Ptolemies occupied Palestine. Perhaps about the middle of the third century, probably at Jerusalem, the Chronicler wrote his history of the Jews—I and II Chronicles—and edited Ezra-Nehemiah, which was originally, and should be read as, one work. About the same time, *Prov., chs. 1 to 9,* was written, and the whole book, containing many earlier proverbs, was arranged in its present form. Ecclesiastes, which rather strongly reflects the fact that Greek thought was influencing Judaism, was also written under the Ptolemies. The Book of Jonah may have been written soon after the Greek invasion, although some scholars feel that it came out during the latter part of the Persian period. The Song of Solomon in its present form was probably written early in the Ptolemaic period.

These works are among the latest writings in the Old Testament. Very little comes from a later period—only Daniel and Esther and a few other short passages. But the freedom allowed the Jews by the Ptolemies was conducive to a considerable amount of literary activity. The Jews in Palestine who wished to could resist the Hellenization to which much of the world, especially Syria on their northern border, was succumbing. But the day was coming when the Ptolemies could no longer defend their Palestinian territory from Syrian aggression. When that day arrived, the Jews became subject to Seleucid rule and authority; and this change almost resulted in the annihilation of the Jews and of the faith of their fathers.

3: GREEKS BEARING GIFTS

As we have already seen, after Alexander died in 323 B.C., Ptolemy seized Egypt, Palestine, and southern Syria, and Seleucus emerged with most of Syria and the whole eastern part of the empire. But the Seleucids wanted access to the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, and there were constant battles between them and the Ptolemies for Palestine, Phoenicia, and southern Syria. The early Ptolemies of the third century B.C. were able to maintain their claims to this territory, but things began to change toward the end of the century.

In 223, just a hundred years after Alexander's death, Antiochus III (the Great) became the Seleucid king. He began immediately to prepare for war. Three times—in 221, 219, and 218—he tried to wrest the eastern Mediterranean coast from the Egyptian king, Ptolemy IV Philopator, but three times he was defeated, the last time in 217, at Raphia, in southern Idumaea.

Because Palestinian soil was involved in three succesive wars between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, and because the Ptolemaic king was so occupied in mustering forces to repel Seleucid attack, there could be little prosperity for Palestinian Jews. Ptolemy IV was king from 221 to 203 B.C.; upon his death, Antiochus III entered Palestine. There was little resistance to this invasion, and Antiochus made many promises to the Jews, hoping to win their friendship and allegiance. In 200 the Egyptians retook Palestine, but two years later, Antiochus again marched against the Egyptian general and routed his forces in the battle of Paneas. With this defeat in 198, the Ptolemies lost Palestine for good, and the land of the Jews passed into the hands of the Syrian Seleucids.

The Jews held the Syrians to the promises they had made earlier. Tribute to the Temple, freedom from taxation for all Jews associated with the Temple, and the inviolability of the Temple were all granted by the Syrians.

The Gifts of Greek Culture

The Jews thought they had gained in the exchange of a Ptolemy for a Seleucid ruler. And, for the moment, perhaps they had. But there was an internal problem arising among the Jews: Hellenization—the question of the compatibility or incompatibility of the Jewish faith with Greek culture.

After Alexander's conquest of the Near East, Greek-styled cities were founded there, and the Greek language displaced other languages spoken by the civilized peoples of the whole area. Reading of Greek literature, especially Greek philosophy, followed from the adoption of the Greek language. And so it was that during the third century before Christ the Near East was being more and more Hellenized, was adopting Greek ways of thinking, Greek assumptions about man and the world, and Greek cultural interests.

In the midst of this territory which was being ever more widely pervaded by Hellenism were the Jews living in Palestine. To the south of Palestine was Egypt, ruled by the Ptolemies, in which was the city of Alexandria, founded by Alexander and now a center of Greek learning and culture. To the north of Palestine was Syria, which had had Antioch on the Orontes River as its capital from the middle of the third century B.C. But there were also Greek cities with Greek names in Palestine itself. Palestine was not a Jewish island surrounded by a Greek world, but a Swiss cheese penetrated by Hellenism.

The Jews, thus living in a Greek world, faced a hard question: To what degree, if any, could they adopt Hellenism in any of its aspects without forfeiting the essential elements of Jewish faith? The answer to this question would determine not only the character of future Judaism but its very survival.

This internal problem was heightened by the pervasiveness of Hellenism even on Palestinian soil. There were Jews who thought they could remain true to Jewish faith and piety and at the same time, make concessions to the Greek culture that had become their living environment. These Jews believed in the fruitfulness of compromise and in the necessity of adaptation. Perhaps, they reasoned, Hellenism had a contribution to make to Judaism. It is difficult to know to what degree such reasoning was the result of rationalization dictated by powerful external forces over which the Jews had little or no control. But, in any case, there were other Jews who did not believe they could remain faithful to Judaism if they made any concessions whatever to Hellenistic influences. These Jews thought that to remain faithful to God they had to turn away from all pagan elements in the land and isolate themselves from everything foreign to the commands they had received from God.

This conflict between opposing parties within Judaism was more than a clash of ideas. It had its visible manifestations. For example, in some Greek cities in Palestine (later also in Jerusalem), large gymnasiums were built, like those found in the cities of Greece; and the Greek emphasis on the development and beauty of the human body was imported into Palestine. Many Jews took an interest in Greek sports and physical exercise, and they participated, with the Greeks, in the nude. But, of course, the Jewish males were circumcised, and their circumcision became a source of considerable embarrassment. So they attempted to remove the marks of their circumcision. But could one be a Jew and not be circumcised? Orthodox

Jews would have to answer, Certainly not! Circumcision was the mark of dedication to the God with whom Israel stood in covenant relation.

The Price of Incense

The gymnasium and everything it stood for was Greek. Many Jews resented even the presence of such structures on Palestinian soil. But the gymnasium was only one of many Greek intrusions. Greek sculpture, Greek music, Greek names, and, above all and most important, Greek assumptions about the nature of man, about the world in which men live, and about the Divine—all these elements were filling the air, were becoming part of the character and tone of life in which Jews even in Jerusalem were forced to live. Some Jews were willing to accommodate themselves to this Hellenistic infiltration in a give-and-take way. What is a pinch of incense if one can have peace!

But there were other Jews who could not concede that there was any meeting ground between the orthodox Jewish faith and Hellenism. Their practice was to withdraw from their surroundings, to express their faith and to practice their piety as unaffected by outside influences as possible, and to look with suspicion —even antagonism—on any Jews who were willing to make concessions to paganism. Thus were the Jews divided in the early second century when Antiochus IV ruled Palestine.

4: THE POT BOILS

When Antiochus III defeated the Egyptian army at Paneas in 198 B.C., the Jews believed that their situation had been considerably improved. They began to profit materially and took advantage of every opportunity to add to their coffers, holding the Syrians to the promises they had made when they had first supplanted the Ptolemies in Palestine.

But Antiochus III soon had his own troubles and was not particularly interested in the welfare of the Jews. In 190 he was badly defeated by the Romans at Magnesia and was forced to pay them an enormous annual military tribute. The Syrian kingdom was drained of money, and Antiochus III took to robbing temples. Anyone who would promise money was welcomed at the Syrian court, and the highest bidders were rewarded.

Different Ways to Rob a Temple

When Antiochus III died in 187 B.C., he was succeeded by his son, Seleucus IV Philopator. King Seleucus sent an exactor, Heliodorus, to Israel to investigate the treasures in the Temple and to bring back some funds. Heliodorus knew there was lots of gold, but he couldn't get his hands on any of it. In 175 he arranged for the death of King Seleucus and then took personal charge of the government; but before the year was out, he was displaced by Seleucus' brother, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Antiochus IV had to deal with the problem that his brother and father had not been able to solve: namely, money—or the lack of it. Rather than try to rob the Temple at Jerusalem, he accepted a large bribe from a man who wanted to be high priest, a Hellenistic Jew who had changed his name from the Hebrew Joshua to the Greek Jason. Jason promised an additional sum if Antiochus would give him permission to establish a gymnasium in Jerusalem and to enroll the men of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch, the Syrian capital. Thus Jason, a Jew, was paying the Syrian king for the right to Hellenize the Jews!

With a Hellenistic high priest collaborating with Antiochus Epiphanes in Hellenizing the Jews, even young priests at the Temple were neglecting the sacrifices to compete in discus throwing. The traditions of the fathers, hallowed by centuries of observance, were no longer being recognized even in the Temple. It was at this time, when Judaism was being corrupted from the inside, that the orthodox Jews banded together under the name of the *Hasidim* (holy ones) to withstand the sinful and unacceptable apostasy of their Hellenized brethren.

Jason had thought he detected the way the wind was blowing and had set his sails accordingly. But others could also play his game and might even play it better. After he had been in office for three years, Jason sent Menelaus to Antiochus on business. Menelaus, in the presence of the king, outbid Jason for the high priestly office and returned to Jerusalem as the newly appointed high priest. Jason fled.

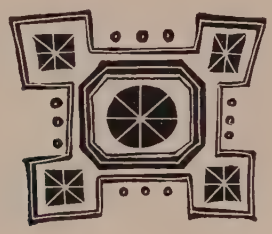
In order to raise the enormous sum he had promised Antiochus, Menelaus robbed the Temple in Jerusalem. Meanwhile Antiochus was building an army of considerable strength and loyalty. In 169 B.C. he engaged in a successful campaign against Egypt. When he returned to Antioch via Jerusalem, Menelaus allowed him to plunder the Temple of all its treasures, including the golden altar. Antiochus even stripped the gold facade from the front of the Temple.

> "Taking them all, he departed to his own land.
> He committed deeds of murder,
> and spoke with great arrogance.
> Israel mourned deeply in every community,
> rulers and elders groaned,
> maidens and young men became faint,
> the beauty of the women faded."
>
> (*I Macc. 1: 24-26.*)

What must have been the Jewish reaction, not only against Antiochus but also against his appointed high

priest, who raised not a finger when the Temple was stripped bare? Jews who had committed themselves to Hellenism stood with Menelaus. But Antiochus must have known that the division of the Jews caused by Hellenism would not last longer than it would take for one side to destroy the other. The lines were now being too clearly drawn; no Jew could remain neutral. One stood either with Hellenism or with orthodoxy, and the day was fast coming when one or the other would have to give way.

A year later, in 168, while Antiochus was engaged in another successful military campaign in Egypt, he was presented with an ultimatum from the Roman Senate that he should withdraw his troops forthwith. Forced to give up his gains, Antiochus was greatly depressed. Nor did it help his morale any to learn that Judea was in revolt. The nature of this revolt is not altogether clear, but apparently Jason had heard a rumor that Antiochus had been killed in Egypt. He therefore returned to Jerusalem with a thousand men and tried to regain the high priesthood for himself. Meanwhile, Menelaus withdrew to the citadel, and Jason was finally forced to withdraw.



It is not certain whether the battle that raged in Jerusalem was motivated by religious or political interests. Perhaps the issue was confused. But regardless of the reasons for the uprising, Antiochus dispatched an army of 22,000 men to take care of matters. Many Jews were killed when the army arrived, part of Jerusalem was burned, and houses were torn down. The Syrians then fortified Jerusalem with a strong wall and built the *Acra*—a fortified citadel occupied by pagan Syrians. This *Acra* was a miniature city, inhabited by "wicked men" whose presence there was a perpetual symbol to the orthodox Jews of heathen infiltration and domination.

Rooting Out the Source of Trouble

Soon after Antiochus had sent in his troops, he acted again—probably in the same year, 168 B.C. This time he sent not an army, but an ultimatum. He had at last come to the conclusion that the source of his troubles in Israel was the Jewish faith. If he could eradicate Judaism, he could have peace in Palestine, and the Temple treasury as well. And so Antiochus issued a decree forbidding the practice of Judaism. No offerings or sacrifices were to be made in the Temple; the sanctuary and the priests were to be defiled, the Sabbaths and feasts profaned; altars to idols were to be built; swine and unclean animals were to be sacrificed; circumcision was not to be allowed; all copies of the Hebrew Scriptures were to be destroyed; and an altar to the Olympian Zeus was to be erected on the altar of burnt offering in the Temple, thus profaning the sanctuary so that the sacrifices could no longer be offered by a Jew. The penalty for disobeying any part of this decree was death.

Had the Jews obeyed the ultimatum, Judaism would have been annihilated. Many Jews, of course, conformed to the order. Was it worth it to have one's infant circumcised if the circumcision would entail death not only for the child but also for the whole family? Some answered no. "But many in Israel stood firm .... They chose to die rather than to be defiled . . . ; and they did die." (*I Macc. 1: 62-63.*)

Antiochus sent inspectors to make sure that his decree to enforce Jewish apostasy was being obeyed. In order to test Jews, to determine whether they had renounced the worship of God, Syrian officers compelled Jews to offer sacrifices on the pagan altars that had been built in the towns and cities. Leading Jews in particular were selected to offer these sacrifices as public testimony that they had repudiated Judaism. One day in the town of Modein an officer of the king commanded Mattathias to be "the first to come and do what the king commands" and so "be numbered among the friends of the king" (*ch. 2: 18*). The officer had approached the wrong man. Mattathias' answer was, "Even if all the nations that live under the rule of the king obey him, . . . yet I and my sons and my brothers will live by the covenant of our fathers." (*Vs. 19-20.*) At that moment a Jew stepped forward to offer the sacrifice. Mattathias, "burning with zeal," ran up and killed the traitorous Jew upon the altar. He then slew the Syrian officer, tore down the pagan altar, and cried out in the city with a loud voice, "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!" (*v. 27*). Then Mattathias and his sons fled to the hills, leaving everything they had behind them.

Revolt

What were the odds in the struggle thus begun between the orthodox among the Jews and the Syrian army? Odds probably didn't mean very much to Mattathias and his sons, or to the Jews who were soon to join them in the hills of Judah; for these Jews knew themselves to belong to a people with a peculiar history and believed themselves to be supported by the Ruler of history. They were in the line of Abraham and Joseph, of Moses and Joshua, of David, Elijah, and the prophets. And so Mattathias, before his death, told his sons to remember that "none who put their trust in [God] will lack strength" (*I Macc. 2: 61*).

5: VICTORY GOES TO SEED

MATTATHIAS, his sons, and all who were "zealous for the law" remained in the hills and engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Syrians. As orthodox Jews, however, they could not fight on the Sabbath, and the Syrians quickly took advantage of this situation. One Sabbath, the king's troops attacked a band of Jews. The Jews said they would not profane the Sabbath by defending themselves. And so on that day great numbers of men and women were killed.

When Mattathias heard of this incident he realized that if the Jews did not retaliate on the Sabbath, all of them would eventually be slain. So he decreed that in order to defend the law against heathenism, the Sabbath law would have to be broken. One might interpret this decree as a symbol of the dilemma in which the Jews were to remain during the time they tried to maintain themselves as a political entity in either the Greek or Roman worlds.

The rebelling Jews, though small in number, were effective in making raids on communities of apostate Jews and pagans. They tore down pagan altars, forcibly circumcised babies of Jews who were obeying the command of Antiochus, stole copies of the law from Gentiles, and in general tried to uphold the law of Moses in the land.

Judas Maccabeus

About 166 B.C. Mattathias died and left command of the army in the hands of his third son, Judas, called "Maccabeus." The word "Maccabeus" is not a proper name, but means "hammerer" or "extinguisher." It was given to Judas because of his success in warfare against the Syrians. It has since been applied as a name for the family and descendants of Mattathias, all of whom are often referred to as "Maccabeans." The family name, however, was Hasmon, and the family is more correctly referred to as "Hasmonaean."

Judas rallied his forces and finally resolved to capture Jerusalem and the Temple that had been desecrated. He and his brothers, having defeated the Syrians, went up to Mount Zion. They found "the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, . . . the gates burned, . . . the chambers of the priests in ruins." (*I Macc. 4: 38.*) So they cleansed the sanctuary and tore down and rebuilt the altar of burnt offering that had been profaned by the altar to the Olympian Zeus. They made new holy vessels and generally refurbished the Temple. Then on the twenty-fifth day of the Hebrew month of Chislev (approximately our December), in the year 164 B.C., they offered sacrifice according to the law on the new altar they had built. "All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them." (*V. 55.*) For eight days the Jews celebrated the dedication of the altar. This "feast of dedication" (Hanukkah) is still kept by the Jews.

Judas then turned to military campaigns against neighboring peoples. Antiochus Epiphanes died in 163 B.C., and the disintegration of the Syrian empire began. Judas tried to take the *Acra* of Jerusalem, the fortified citadel which the Syrians still held, but he failed. The fortunes of war wavered from side to side, between Judas and the Hellenists; and in 160 Judas fell in battle. He had regained access for his people to the holy Temple, which he had rededicated; he had tried to push back the Syrians. But in this latter cause he had gained no decisive victory.

Jonathan

Hellenistic Jews who had been opposed to Judas, aided by the Syrians, took advantage of his death and attempted to suppress the orthodox party altogether. But Judas' friends decided that his brother Jonathan should take his place as leader in the struggle against Hellenism. Jonathan and his men were forced to retreat to the wilderness, and from there they made raids on Hellenistic forces. The *Acra* (citadel) at Jerusalem still remained in the hands of the Syrians.

In 152 B.C. a Syrian wishing to make himself king outbid the promises that had been made to Jonathan by the Syrian king, Demetrius I, and made Jonathan both high priest and civil governor of the Jews. At this time the Jews were granted the privilege of being governed by one of their own people and in accordance with their own laws.

Later Jonathan attempted to capture the great citadel at Jerusalem. But before he could do so, he was tricked by a Syrian named Trypho, who wanted to usurp the Syrian throne, and he was taken prisoner. Trypho then thought he could destroy all Jonathan's troops and so eliminate the ceaseless disturbances caused by the orthodox Jews; but Simon, another son of Mattathias, stepped into Jonathan's place and, in 142, assumed command of the Jews when Trypho finally put Jonathan to death.

Simon

Simon hastily organized a strong army; and Trypho, having killed the Syrian king, usurped the Syrian throne. But Simon built up the fortifications around Jerusalem and finally compelled the Syrian garrison stationed in the great citadel at Jerusalem to capitulate. The Jews entered it with praise and hymns and songs, because at last the Syrian enemy had been removed from Jerusalem. Thus was "the yoke of the Gentiles . . . removed from Israel" (*I Macc. 13: 41*), and the Jews began to date their history from the year 142 B.C.

For the first time in over four hundred years—indeed since before the coming of Nebuchadnezzar and their exile to Babylonia—the Jews were an independent political power. Mattathias had begun the struggle by defending the law of God. His sons, Judas Maccabeus and Jonathan, had succeeded him in leadership and had gone down in battle. And now a third son, Simon, largely due to the disintegration of the Syrian empire, finally justified the unyielding tenacity of the orthodox Jewish party. He drove the heathen from the land and then made an alliance with the great power of Rome, confirmed by a large gold shield which he sent to the capital. His people conferred on him and on his descendants the permanent authority as ruling high priests and as governors "until a trustworthy prophet should arise" (*ch. 14: 41*).

From all outward appearances, the Jews could look forward to a long period of peace and prosperity under the strong leadership of Simon and his successors. But the situation in Judah could not be accurately judged from the outside. Although Simon ruled over a people who *appeared* to be at peace, the Hasmonaeans had been given authority mainly because Simon and his brothers had successfully exterminated so many pro-Hellenistic Jews. At the same time, not all Hellenistic Jews in Palestine had been annihilated. Simon and his sons would have to deal with a continuing internal opposition which, before a century was out, would bring Hasmonaean rule to an end.

Simon's brother-in-law, wishing to displace him as ruler and hoping to obtain Syria's backing, enticed Simon and two of his sons to a banquet. When the high priest and his sons had consumed sufficient wine, they and their servants were all slain. Men were then dispatched to dispose of another of Simon's sons, John, in a similar way. But John, warned of their coming, was prepared to meet them with his own men, and the party sent to take care of John was neatly disposed of.

John Hyrcanus

Hasmonaean leadership passed to the third generation when John Hyrcanus,[1] shocked by the murder of his father, assumed the offices of governor and high priest. The name "Hyrcanus" was probably taken from the town, Hyrcania, which was located between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. John, having taken possession of Jerusalem, sent troops to attack the forces that were trying to usurp his place; and before he knew it, he had also to deal with Syrian troops who were on their way. In order to relieve his financial difficulties, Hyrcanus opened David's tomb; and with the treasures he found there, he hired foreign mercenaries.

Meanwhile, news reached Jerusalem that the Syrian king had been killed in battle and that the hated and feared Demetrius II had become the new king. Seleucid claims to Jerusalem had never been given up; and once again a Hasmonaean would have to defend himself against Syrian attack and against the Hellenistic Jews at home who had never willingly accepted Hasmonaean rule. But John was a strong leader; and he, like his father and uncles and grandfather, had the support of the indomitable orthodox party. He set out with his paid foreign troops not only to defend the land against Syrian attack, but to restore the borders of Israel to what they had once been according to the sacred books of the law.

Hyrcanus was a valiant military leader, ambitious and clever. He was greatly helped in his exploits by suicidal internal wars among the Seleucids, and he cultivated friendship with Rome. He pushed back the borders of Israel to where they once had been under Solomon, nearly a thousand years before. He even compelled the Idumeans to be circumcised and to become part of the Jewish state—an act of force that was later to have most significant consequences for the Jews. The Idumeans were the descendants of the Edomites, a people who had hated the Jews throughout their history. It would not be long before an Idumean family would retaliate against Hasmonaean power and would destroy it. Hyrcanus also incorporated the Samaritans among the Jews, and the mutual hostility between the two people, greatly increased by this move, was not soon to subside.

Under the bold and victorious military leadership of Hyrcanus, the Jews became, from one point of view, a glorious, powerful state, rich with material blessings. But there was a mixture of motives in their situation that could not endure forever; and that mixture was symbolized by the fact that Hyrcanus was not only the general of the army but the high priest as well. Hyrcanus' grandfather, Mattathias, had begun a *defensive* insurrection in the interest of obeying the commandments of the Lord; but Hyrcanus engaged in offensive attacks in the interest of establishing a powerful political state. The Hasmonaeans had originated as the leaders and defenders of the Hasidim (holy ones) against Hellenism, either within or outside of Judaism; but under Hyrcanus the Hasidim withdrew from Hasmonaean leadership, and even opposed it. When this happened, the original *raison d'etre* of the Hasmonaeans ceased to exist, and their only remaining justification was military and political.

The Hasidim who withdrew from the Hasmonaeans were called Pharisees. (The word "Pharisee" means "separated.") At the same time, another group of ultraconservative Jews also separated themselves from their fellows, becoming a distinct and isolated sect. They settled in a desert region by the Dead Sea, at Qumrân. Of this sect, and of the end of Hasmonaean power and the rise of Roman authority in Palestine, we shall hear next quarter.

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[1] The history in I Maccabees ends with the death of Simon. For John Hyrcanus see Josephus: *Antiquities 13: 8-10* and *Wars 1: 2*. Dates for this period may be different by one year among scholars. This is because the Hebrew year began with April, and some scholars follow the Hebrew month system, and some follow ours.

RESOURCES FOR STUDY IN A

Parents' Discussion Group

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The Graciousness of God
2. Grace Under the Roof
3. Creativity and the Child
4. What Books Do You Read, and Why?
5. Times Change, but Not Teen-Agers
6. Fear

The Graciousness of God

By Alexander Miller

I AM to concern myself neither with "grace before meat" (though that may get in later) nor with that kind of gracious living which, in California, has to do with the patio and the barbecue (though we shall have a word to say about that too). My business is to write about that most central of Christian doctrines, *the grace of God,* which is the theme of our hymns and which we are taught to believe is the ground of our hope. I am to talk about the grace of God by talking about the family and showing it at work there; and I am to try to talk Christian sense about the family by setting it in the light of the grace of God.

On the face of it, that ought not to be too hard for any theologian worth his keep, but the word *grace* has been so manhandled that it is slippery to get hold of; and the hard and glorious truth about the family is presently hidden behind a veil of sentimentality.

American religion has lent itself to a deal of slick nonsense. Grace is a difficult word to deal with in such a situation. The intricate enterprise of living under the same roof cannot be managed by some formula like "the family that prays together stays together." And the picture in our family journals of the well-polished parents with the right number of children of the right age making their way to the church of their choice presents nothing that is downright vicious. But the picture suggests that the children were come by in a sexless and genteel fashion, and the picture does nothing to solve the problem of whether the "right number" of children is to be settled by discipline or by devices. We are led to pass discreetly over the probable fact that at least one of the children kicked and screamed at the very notion of going to church, and that Poppa probably said to Momma: "Well, I'll go. But I don't understand a word the man says, especially when he talks about grace."

In this article I do not propose to set out a straight *theology of grace,* but to find illustrations of what theology is talking about—in the life of the family, which is the life that we all know best, the most infuriating and most rewarding life of all. In the second article I want to ask what the family will look like when its vexing and rewarding life together is set in the light of the grace of God.

God's "Election" of His People

For good or ill, and hard as it may be for a moralistic age to understand it, the Bible is not a book of rules, but the book of *grace.* And this is true of the Old Testament as well as of the New. When the people of Israel talked of God, they did not think first of words like *omnipotence* and *omniscience,* whatever these may mean, but of words that, in our versions, are translated *loving-kindness* and *steadfast love.* And when they spoke of God's *righteousness,* they were talking not about his morals, but about his *faithfulness.* God is holy, active love: and that is close to what *grace* means in both the Old and New Testaments. It is the word the men of the Bible use when they want to speak of God active in love, especially when his acts of love are more than men deserve (as they always are). Biblical men understood themselves, for reasons they set down, to be the beneficiaries of a love beyond their deserving, a love that brought with it all kinds of benefits, some of a rather odd sort.

The Hebrews understood themselves to be the people of God, not by any contriving, and certainly not by any merit of their own, but by the strange choice of God.

Surely this has its analogy in any good marriage. Ask any happily married man, whether he got that

DR. MILLER, until his death in May, 1960, was professor of religion at Stanford University, Stanford, California.

way by his own ingenuity or by his own merit, and he will begin at once to tell you how mysterious and undeserved the whole thing is: he doesn't know what she saw in him, he can't understand why she didn't choose So-and-So, who had so much more to offer. You will find the same accent when Israel talks of God; for example, we read in *Deut. 7: 6-8:* "The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, . . . not because you were more in number than any other people . . . , for you were the fewest . . . ; but it is because the Lord loves you."

Incidentally, this is what the hassle over *predestination* is all about. When Presbyterians are challenged about predestination, they should not be shifty about it, as if our father Calvin invented it, and he should have known better. Calvin didn't invent it: it is written deep in the Scriptures, and Thomas Aquinas (a medieval theologian who is to Catholics what Calvin is to Presbyterians) is as emphatic about it as Calvin ever was. We need only to understand it. When the men of the Bible talk about *election* and *predestination* as they do, they are drawing attention to something in God's relation to us that is true of any deep personal relation. When we love and are loved, there is something in the relation that we have not *done* but that we have been *given*. The young man in love knows, first, that love was given and not earned (he was *elected*), and that for his part he had no choice *but* to love. But, if you asked him whether, being compelled to love, he had become a mere puppet, he would reply that his freedom is as intact as it ever was: he chooses to be what he can't help but be. It may not make strict logical sense, but it makes good human sense.

Grace and Knowledge

Once Hebrew faith has been initiated into the understanding that God is active love, it follows, for the men of faith, that the way to the knowledge of God is not, as is thought so often, to draw away from the world but to draw near to it in love. The personal God of the Bible is to be known as a person is known: not by the way of philosophical speculation or scientific logic, but in the relationship of trust and love. In philosophy, the clearer the head the greater the knowledge; in science, the more facts the more knowledge. But between persons, the more *love* the more knowledge.

We can illustrate again from the life of the family what Biblical faith has to say about God and our relationship to him. We know about him only what he chooses to let us know, just as with those we love most. We know them only because they are "open" to us. This is what *revelation* means. We cannot command the knowledge of God, but must "wait" upon him; and, as in the human analogy, the condition of knowing anything at all would seem to be what in the Old Testament *and* in the New is called "the pure heart"—what we would call sincerity or integrity, which is the condition of any wholesome personal relationship whatsoever. Furthermore, knowledge of God, like knowledge of other persons, is of such a character that the more of it we have, the more the wonder and the mystery deepen. A man knows his wife in the measure of his love for her and hers for him. He would be a bold man who would claim that he understands her, or that he ever comes to the point where he knows all about her. That may be why the New Testament speaks of "the wisdom of God in a mystery" (*I Cor. 2: 7,* KJV); not the mystery of dark, recessed temples and guttering torches, but the mystery of unfathomed and unfathomable love.

Grace and Law

One of the odd things about Jewish faith is the way in which it speaks of *law*. Most of us will put up with law because we know it is good for us and for others, but "we don't have to like it," especially when the cop gives *us* the ticket. But the men of the Bible speak often of their "delight" in the law. And this, of course, is because the law of the Lord in which they take delight is God's will for their good. This is one of the clearest signs we have that the Jews thought of God first as Love and then as Law, and as a God of law because he was a God of love. It would be silly to pretend that the Bible is always consistent about this, but the clear conviction does shine through that God gives the law because he loves his people, and his people keep the law, when they know what they are about, because they love him.

The law, then, is a work of *grace*. It preserves the people of God from the harm they might do one another by reason of sin, and it holds life up to the level of moral responsibility and of answerability to God and the neighbor. Surely, in the family we can see, in analogy, what this means. It is a modern sentimentality that would set love and severity in opposition, as if love went with softness. The Jews were wiser to see in God's severity the very token of his love, his stern care for their best good. Of course, law is not the full expression of love, but it is the only possible expression of love for children who have not learned, or for adults who will not learn, the conditions of maturity and freedom: for those, that is to say, who are still in need of a "schoolmaster" (*Gal. 3: 24,* KJV).

Grace and Forgiveness

The conviction of God's forbearance is never absent from the Bible, and the people of Israel learned to read even their sufferings, not as signs of God's abandonment of them, but as signs that he was determined by whatever disciplines necessary to teach them what they needed to know. But the final revelation of grace as forgiveness comes with the coming of the Christ. His death is interpreted by the New Testament as the sign that God has kept faith even with faithless Israel, that there is no limit to his love.

It is this love without limit that becomes the very ground plan of the New Community, the church that is born of Christ's death. This love without limit breaks the power of self-love and binds men to God and to one another in an at-one-ment as sure as the love of God. The church is constituted of those men who, hearing the gospel, know themselves beloved of God not for their virtue, but in spite of their sin. And when they are tempted to think that this limitless love of God is a charter to sin again and again, they have to come to terms with the facts that love is more binding than law, and that the assurance of forgiveness is not a charter for sinning. Forgiveness furnishes the new motivation for avoiding sin like the plague.

This, too, has its illustration from the bond of family life. Suppose a man knows that his wife loves him enough to take him back again and again after manifold unfaithfulness: Is this a motive for being faithful or for being faithless? "Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!" (*Rom. 6: 15.*)

So we could go on and on. Just because the life of the family is grounded in love and maintained at great cost, it offers the best parable of that costly and relentless love by which the Lord of heaven and earth chooses and cherishes a people for his own.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 1

Before the Discussion

Dr. Miller has focused his discussion of grace on the family. He has found in family life certain clues that help us to understand the grace of God as it is disclosed in the Bible. Also, he has found in the Biblical disclosure of God's grace some significant resources for understanding our family life. These resources are located especially in areas of election, knowledge of God, law, and forgiveness.

Grace, formally defined, means unmerited or undeserved favor.

Formally, then, we can understand God's favor to us as something we do not deserve, either because we actually deserve something far worse than favor, or because we have no means for deserving it, that is, working for it. Dr. Miller helps us to get beyond a formal understanding of grace by picturing for us the genuine stuff of love as *we* know it, i.e., in families. Here we discover that love is a gift that is given to us, because the giver wants to give it. We love the other person, but not for what he can do for us or because he has already done something for us and we, consequently, are in his debt. We simply love the other person. That is our gift. To live in such a relationship is to find a clue for seeing that God is gracious, that he loves us without first thinking about what we deserve or what he is going to get out of it. Love is not calculating, in God or in any of his creatures who love. Love is a gift, a *gracious* gift.

Parents will, of course, realize that gracious love is not always the rule in their homes, rather, at times, is the exception. And they may be tempted to try to work for the establishment of this gracious love, to strain for it, to set down plans for making it happen. This discussion may help them see their own family life within a larger—*Biblical*—context. Forgiveness, not hard work, is the royal road to gracious love. God expresses his grace to us in the very insight that we are each one, as creatures, loved beyond deserving. We may thus be assured of personal forgiveness, and in such a way that *we* begin to love without calculation and without the hidden thought that we therefore will be training a child or a husband or a wife to love us in return. Love seeks the other's good and that is all. And that also is precisely the gracious base for true family community.

In the discussion of this topic, the leader should encourage parents to see the parables of grace that are outlined in the article as parables of the grace of *God*. (In family life or any other kind of life we are always fundamentally dealing with *God*.) Only after they have some real awareness of what Dr. Miller is talking about can the members proceed to find other parables of grace in their own concrete family life. You will note that the questions for discussion are arranged in such a way that questions 5-7 may be used to provoke concrete discussion of the family life that these parents know.

Questions for Discussion

1. How can the prayer offered by a family to God before a meal be called "grace"? What does the word mean in that setting?

2. What, specifically, beyond the author's comments, do you find wrong with the picture of sleek families in popular American journalism?

3. Many husbands publicly protest the fact that their wives chose them, proposed to them, and married them. And their wives answer defensively that they did no such thing. Is this a parable of grace? If not, of what is it a parable?

4. What does Dr. Miller intend by using the expression "the pure heart"? (This occurs in the last paragraph of the section entitled "Grace and Knowledge.") Does the use of that expression rule you out of the discussion? How is it found or how is the unpure heart purified?

5. The author has presented some illustrations of the way in which Biblical faith illuminates family life, and he has also shown ways in which family life illuminates Biblical faith. Did this approach to the relationship of the grace of God with families lead you to think specifically about your own family life? What did you find that is illuminating?

6. Discuss the notion that grace is love beyond deserving as it is addressed to your own home. What does the word "deserving" mean? "love"?

7. Is the law a work of grace in your home?

For Further Reading

You might consider the following resources for a later meeting:

1. *The Meaning of Christ,* by Robert Clyde Johnson (Layman's Theological Library, The Westminster Press; $1.00).

2. *Christian Faith and Life,* Article 5, "Do You Really Want to Be Saved?" by William H. Chalker, in this magazine.

Grace Under the Roof

By Alexander Miller

THE BIBLE has a way of speaking of a family as a *house:* so that, if the men of the Bible had talked of *good housekeeping,* they would have meant, or could have meant, not dishes and drapes, but the good conduct of life lived under a common roof.

The enterprise of common-roof living can never be simple. Human nature is intractable stuff under the easiest of circumstances: it needs community, but does not easily accept the conditions of it. It is hungry for close-quarters living, but is resistant to the demands it makes. Life in the "house" has problems that are not to be understood lightly or coped with readily. Family life is both risky and rewarding, and rewarding partly because it is risky. Yet just because it tests human nature to the limit, it is one of the places where the grace of God may be most clearly seen and fully known, and where human life therefore may be richest.

Because it is an almost impossible enterprise, and yet most critical for human happiness and for the health of the human community, family life has been buttressed by all kinds of rules, both written and unwritten, and societies have visited the severest penalties upon those who make the enterprise more difficult than it already is.

CHARACTERISTIC PROBLEMS

A Democracy of Two?

George Gobel once discussed the problem of running a house and, in particular, the trouble there can be in a democracy of two when husband and wife cast their equal votes on opposite sides of the same question. He declared that he and his wife Alice had found a happy solution for this dilemma. He (the husband) made all the *major* decisions—like whether or not the UN should intervene in Korea or whether America should stay in the UN, while his wife was left with the *minor* decisions—like where the kids should go to school, whether or not he should quit his job, how the family income should be used, and so on. He is a good comic because he deals with real problems; and this is a real problem. How do two people join two wills without subordinating one to the other? And this is only one of the humanly insoluble problems inherent in every marriage. Time was when families, like states, simply sanctified power for the sake of order and gave unqualified authority to the father. The shifting of this pattern has brought with it a whole new set of problems:

"The modern marriage relationship is therefore under the necessity of developing grace within a more rigorously equalitarian standard between the sexes and providing for two foci, rather than one, for the family group. In the same way the pattern expressed in the ancient commandment that 'children should obey their parents' has been altered by imperceptible degrees so that, at its worst, the modern pattern defies some basic facts of nature, which include the superior wisdom and power of the older generation. At best, they prove that an amiable disrespect of parents is more compatible with love than an enforced obedience." [1]

Reinhold Niebuhr, who made this statement, may be right or may be wrong. But it is clear that here is a set of problems between married people, and between parents and children, that will require all the grace and Christian skill we can bring. We presently pride ourselves, and rightly, that the Christian household helps to hold down the incidence of delinquency and divorce in the general community, but there is so much more to be done that here, more than anywhere, is the urgency of Paul's prayer "that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment" (*Phil. 1: 9*). And that has much to do with *grace,* with that love of God which kindles our responsive love for him and for one another and brings all our powers to his service.

Sex and Love

The deep dependence of family life on sex and its management, and the rich results that issue from a sex life well ordered, remind us that the mechanisms of divine grace are not merely spiritual, but are specifically material, even biological. Maybe it is true to say that the first act of grace that the Bible records was the taking of dust and bringing it alive by God's breath. Ever after the bodies of men have been sacred; our spiritual worship is the offering of our bodies (*Rom. 12: 1*); every act done for the amending of the *material* conditions of life is a *spiritual* act in the only meaning of that word that the Bible knows anything about.

But in the family sphere itself, surely we are past pretending that the ordering of unruly passion to the purposes of community is an enterprise within our own power. We can attempt it by law, but we shall accomplish it only by grace, by that divine succor that is partly made available to us in the sweet and whole-

[1] From *The Self and the Dramas of History,* by Reinhold Niebuhr. Copyright, 1955, by Reinhold Niebuhr. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

some disciplines of the family itself, that needs in its turn to be reinforced by every resource of grace that can be poured into it from the community of faith.

The Mechanisms of Grace

There is nothing mysterious about the work of God's grace. If there *is* any mystery about it, it is not a kind of sorcery, but simply the wonder that he should have dealt so graciously with us.

The principal means of grace are what our Presbyterian fathers used to call "the homely ordinances" of word and water, bread and wine, and the faithful community gathered round them and sustained by them. Here are resources beyond measure both for the understanding and for the handling of our dilemmas. And one of the most hopeful things in the contemporary church is the way in which men and women, taxed to the limit by the strains put on marriage and by the tasks of child-rearing, are seeking ways to structure their family life in a living relation to the life of the people of God. This will involve us in—

Liturgy, as we ask together how the worship life of the church may be so ordered that no one can participate in it without seeing personal and family life in truer perspective and in sharper Christian focus. We shall see in particular how the sacrament of Baptism, and the pledges taken by parents and by the people of God in the congregation, not only renew our sense of the shared grace of God, but call us all into a partnership in Christian nurture that will involve both home and school, but whose chief instrument is the ongoing life of the congregation itself, whose Christian education is never better than the quality of its Christian community.

Study, as we join those avid thousands and tens of thousands across the church who are fed-up with the illiterate and twelve-year-old quality of their Christianity, especially parents who know that they neither serve God well themselves nor are fair to their children unless they can give a reason for the faith that is in them and can make their churchmanship not only intelligent but intelligible.

Discipline, which at its best is simply *discipleship* taken seriously. Here most of us must simply confess that we are in dire disorder. In personal prayer, in family worship, in the right use of money and of time —the ancestral patterns are broken, and we work only halfheartedly at restoring them. No one really believes that the old-time Sabbath can be recovered, even if it were right to try. But we cannot live without patterns of prayer and practice that make vivid our commitment and hold us to it. The new *Directory for Public Worship* (in the process of being prepared) will help us all by reminding us what our common gathering is about and how to perform our central responsibility of worthy praise and prayer, but we may have to supplement it out of sheer desperation with a *Directory for Family Worship* and a *Christian Directory* that will do for the twentieth century what Richard Baxter tried to do in the seventeenth—to provide guidance in key areas of our responsibility (the proper use of money, energy, and time).

We are not ready to write such a directory, yet. What is most needed is that quality of Christian commitment and mutuality which will let us be frank with one another about what our problems are in child training, in devotion, and in vocational dilemmas. Congregations will have to streamline their work to meet this need, to cut out all nonessentials, to focus on these three—*worship, study, discipline*—with a view to a corporate life strong and instructed enough to nurture purity and purpose in the homes of all its people, and to breed a generation of Christian men and women who will enter the strange world of the sixties as those who know their Christian business there.

We could, seriously, make a slogan out of *gracious living* without taking our definition of it from the glossy magazines. We would mean by it a life lived in the presence of God and nourished by the grace of God: a life whose accent is gratitude and whose shape is service. What does this mean for the daily round of the home and the daily discipline of prayer? How can we structure our common life and our common speech so that our children cannot escape the conviction that we are people under discipline, a discipline chosen and accepted for the love of Christ? What is the meaning of Christian simplicity in twentieth-century America? How can our daily dealings—the food we eat, the car we buy, the use we make of movies and TV—dramatize our dedication to the proposition that Christ has the best right to our obedience and our brother men the first claim upon our compassion?

Grace under the roof? It would seem to mean that the risks and rewards of Christian life in the family are even greater than we had noticed, and far greater than most men know.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 2

BEFORE THE DISCUSSION

The author points out, in this article, the places where grace is operative in family life. He notes that people yearn for true community—"close-quarters living"—yet resist the demands that such community makes upon them. We thus have many unique problems about which we are taught by the gospel not to despair but to look for—grace!

In discussing these characteristic problems you might try to accent the author's insistence on the grace rather than on the persistence of the problems. For instance, the love—the true, earnest, trusting love between parent and child or between husband and wife—is a token of grace which, in the face of the problem of two strong wills in conflict, is too often forgotten. Yet the token of grace

constitutes the relationship and makes the problem itself possible. This is true as well of the specific problem of sexual love. Sexual love presents often severe problems, which become problems to people who have already committed themselves to each other "for better or for worse." Grace undergirds the relationship that has the problem in it.

The article focuses upon three means of grace found in the Christian community itself. These are not spectacular means of grace, and certainly the parents who read the article will not be surprised to find them. But the way in which liturgy, study, and discipline are treated shows them to be means of grace rather than "church activities." This distinction needs to be made strongly. People who look upon the life and activities of the Christian community as things to do, busy work, or church work, need to be reminded that the God of the church uses Baptism, worship, congregational life, study, and family life in order to be gracious to us. Their content of grace makes them worth doing—and that alone.

"Gracious living" means, quite simply, living *under God.* You might want to point out that grace is not a divine substance, but is a word we use to characterize God's acting in our behalf. In thinking of God's gracious dealing with us and seeking to order our lives in obedience to him, we might not so easily equate the gracious living of the slick magazines with the authentic life of Christians who live together under one roof.

Questions for Discussion

1. George and Alice Gobel found a way to join two wills together. Is their way satisfactory? to George? to Alice? to you? What other ways are possible?

2. The article notes the "amiable disrespect" of children to their parents today and contrasts this with the authoritarian relationship of parents to children in an earlier time. Which relationship seems most gracious? How would you define "amiable disrespect"? Is it as bad as it sounds? as good?

3. How does the author define the mystery of grace?

4. Do you think of the Christian life as a distinctive way of life? Can you tell the difference between the Christian homes and other homes in your own neighborhood? What would you look for? What clues does the article provide?

5. The next to last paragraph of the article contains a series of questions. Discuss these questions simply or choose the most urgent one.

6. What specifically are the risks and rewards of living together under one roof?

For Further Reading

You might consider the following resources as a basis for further discussion at a later meeting:

"The Modern Christian in the Modern Church," a three-article series by John R. Fry in the April–June, 1960, issue of Crossroads.

Roots of Happiness, a 16mm. sound film (25 minutes). Produced by Sun Dial Films, Inc. Available from International Film Bureau, Inc., 57 East Jackson Boulevard, Chicago 4, Ill. Approximate rental, black and white, $5.00.

Creativity and the Child

By Dorothy Barclay

If today's child is to function well in a world of continuing conflict and ever-increasing change, he must have flexibility. If he is to pull his own weight in that world, he must have courage and a sense of responsibility. If he is to contribute something to it as well, he must have the added quality of creativity.

These thoughts, in a variety of forms and words, have been the conclusion of many a recent conference on children "in the space age." The observation has been equally true in every troubled period of history. Flexibility, responsibility, and courage are terms whose meaning most people agree on. But few qualities, it seems to us, are talked about more, to less point, than creativity.

The adjective "creative" applied to almost anything —toys, teaching methods, recreation programs—suggests an up-to-dateness, a quality of supreme constructiveness that raises the item or the activity so labeled beyond criticism or question. But what does the word mean?

As defined in *Webster's New International Dictionary,* "to create" has many meanings. The one most pertinent to our theme seems to be "to produce as a work of thought or imagination, especially as a work of art or of dramatic interpretation along new or unconventional lines." Synonyms given are "make, build, produce, fashion; invent, originate."

In all these definitions the emphasis is on the product. To many educators, however, being creative is seen primarily as "a process of individual experience which enhances the self."

If, in today's world, each man were an island unto himself, we could accept the idea of creativity simply as a process of self-enhancement. If it were known that in tomorrow's world survival and satisfaction would depend solely on what an individual could produce for others, emphasis on product alone would be understandable. But so long as man has both rights for himself and responsibilities to others, it seems to us that the kind of creativity parents and teachers would hope to develop in children must be evaluated in terms of both process and product.

The recent book, *Creativity and Its Cultivation* (Harper & Brothers, $5.00), presents the thinking of

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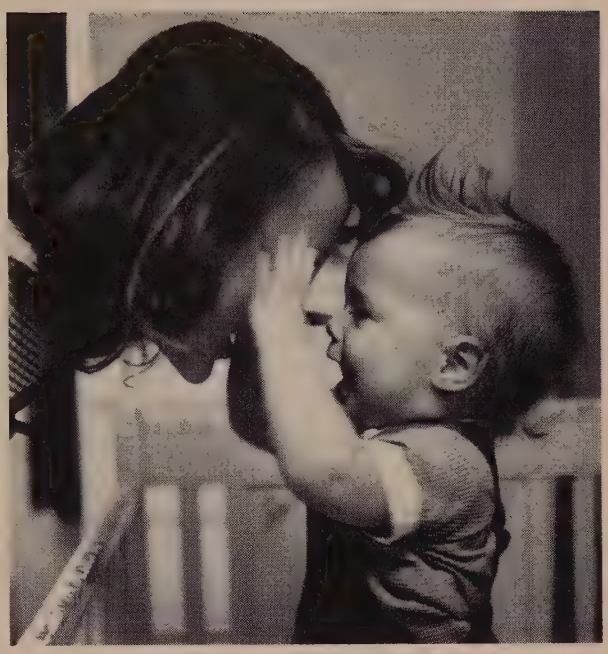

Creativity is a mutual discovery.

fourteen specialists in widely varying fields on this controversial topic. Psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, educators, an anthropologist, an architect, and a professor of law and political science presented the ideas reported at a conference on creativity held at Michigan State University. The many differences and unanswered questions on the subject are clearly set forth.

The consensus appears to be that creativity at its best reflects "a questing quality." It represents the best efforts of an individual to organize either processes or materials into patterns that have meaning, to produce actions or objects that are, in a real sense, useful.

The object produced could be almost anything from the proverbial better mousetrap to a sonnet or a symphony. Or it might be an intangible—an atmosphere, a relationship—something untouchable yet unquestionably real, its realness demonstrated by its results. A good teacher, thought of in this context, is creative, as are the good parent, the skillful doctor, the true friend.

A true creation, then, will be an object, a process, or an atmosphere that will, at the mundane level, help others to cope more comfortably with life. In the highest sense, it will help others to find beauty and meaning in their lives and in their surroundings, to see and to understand the world about them.

Considerable research of many kinds is in progress to define the human traits, inherent or acquired, that contribute to creativity. Equally important is the wide range of studies under way to determine conditions in the environment, physical and social, that seem to enhance or limit creativity.

As for findings and observations already made, one study revealed to the researcher—Anne Roe—only one trait in common among leading artists and scientists: a willingness to work hard and to work long. Edison's definition of genius as one per cent inspiration and 99 per cent perspiration would seem to be borne out. Even in the aesthetic realm such statements have been made. (Baudelaire defined inspiration as "working every day.")

For parents and teachers interested in the development of creativity, this finding might well raise real questions. Driving a child to work hard and long is an almost sure way to stifle any taste for concentrated effort. But what is the effect of anxious concern over the willing worker ("Really, dear, you shouldn't work so hard!") and of the tendency, now lessening but still widespread, to make the zealous individual, the seeker, the striver, feel guilty or out of place?

Another quality identified as basic to creativity, one frequently undervalued or even rejected at school and at home, is the ability to find fault constructively. The ability to recognize lacks or flaws in objects or methods, to pinpoint inconsistencies or conflicts in ideas, must precede efforts to create the new or improved object or atmosphere that will fill the void or surmount the difficulty.

Discontent is not enough in itself to insure creativity. But the sharp rejection of a child's critical observations, an attempt to "put him in his place" if he dares to question his elders, will cut off his chance to present a constructive suggestion—as he should be both permitted and encouraged to do.

Because the creative individual is bound to be regarded as a challenge to the *status quo,* he will need the added qualities of courage, confidence, and independence as well as the strength to stand alone and to resist destructive criticism.

Intelligence alone is not a guarantee of creativity; neither is the amassing of knowledge nor the mastery of technique. Each is necessary, however, for ultimate worth-while production. The full complex of qualities that distinguish the true creator from the outstanding technician still is to be identified.

Certainly experiences that dull a child's senses, make him doubt his honest reactions, hamper his curiosity, shake his confidence, or break his courage will deaden his creativity. Yet some of the world's great creators survived all these. Until far more is known of the nature of creativity, dogmatic pronouncements of its "care and cultivation" must be open to question.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 3

Before the Discussion

On the subject of creativity, as on many other subjects, parents often want to jump too quickly into the area of "how to" questions without understanding exactly what it is they are trying to find out "how to do." Thus, after reading this article, the primary question *seems* very pertinent: "All right, how do we as parents help our children to be creative?" Undoubtedly the group could have a helpful discussion of this question, but the results will probably be better and more "creative" if the parents discuss the nature of creativity itself.

The author of this article identifies the necessity for creativity and finds that creativity is associated both with products and with the process by which these products have been produced. In citing the findings of a group of experts, the author identifies creativity as a "questing quality." Probably the most decisive point in identifying creativity is found in the insistence that creativity ultimately is aimed toward helping others "to cope more comfortably with life" and "to find beauty and meaning in their lives." The direction of the creative individual as he exercises his creativity is outward. He expends the contents of his private life in behalf of public life. This need not be a consciously contrived feeling of doing something for others, and the creative individual may never look upon his products (even if they are intangible products such as mood, and so on) as being useful or helpful to others. The point is that the truly creative person produces things that do turn out to be useful for others.

The author furnishes two clues for the thinking of parents as they consider creativity and their own children. The first clue is that creativity inevitably involves lots of work, concentration, persistence in the face of obstacles, and an often domineering singleness of purpose. Fifteen minutes spent each day on a project do not add up in a week or a month or a year's time to a creative project. The creative person spends more than fifteen minutes, and this can be readily checked by the fact that in spending the time necessary to do the project, he expends himself.

The second clue the author identifies is the ability of the creative person to find fault constructively. This does not mean that creativity is some kind of faultfinding. It does mean that methods, processes, products, *moods,* situations, and relationships are analyzed and scrutinized very carefully and intensely. Finally the fault is ferreted out so that it can be remedied, corrected, or changed in some way. Recall: creativity has to do with constructiveness, building, making.

The author also notes that creativity generally involves intelligence, the amassing of significant amounts of knowledge, and a mastery of necessary techniques involved in doing creative work of any kind. This remark really is an expansion of both clues that the author has supplied.

The suggested focus for this discussion is, "How can parents be creative parents?" And this is not the same kind of question as, "How can parents help their children to be creative?" If the parents in your group can see that this is a job for artists and not mechanics, a creative enterprise that demands "the willingness to work long and hard," "the ability to find fault constructively," and also "intelligence," "the amassing of knowledge," and "the mastery of techniques," then perhaps children in their families will have at least creative examples and a creative force directed toward them in helping them to be creative also.

Questions for Discussion

1. Name a few creative persons of your common acquaintance. What makes them creative? What do they have in common?
2. What one word would define the opposite of creativity? Why?
3. The article suggests that the establishing of mood can be a creative activity. This seems to apply directly to parents. What other activities that have to do specifically with the home are "creative"?
4. Some people seem to be possessed with creative drives and others do not. Are they born that way? Comment on Edison's and Baudelaire's definitions of genius.
5. In what ways could your child presently be more creative than he is? Does the school, church school, home, or Scouts encourage or hamper the child in this direction?
6. The article points out that our society makes the striver, the hard worker, feel guilty and in this way stifles creativity. Can you think of examples that illustrate this point? Do you agree with the indictment?

For Further Reading

A marvelous though difficult resource to consider for a further meeting is found in *Between Man and Man,* by Martin Buber (The Beacon Press, Inc.; $1.25). Two essays in this book deal with education. They are entitled "Education" and "The Education of Character."

What Books Do You Read, and Why?

By George L. Hunt

You are reading this article, so you can read. Chances are you also read books occasionally, perhaps a lot of the time. Reading may be your hobby, or you may have to be well-read in order to keep up with your job. On the other hand, you may have good intentions about reading books, but somehow—after the children are in bed, the dishes done, and the paper read, you talk to each other about the things you could not get in at the dinner

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able—and the evening's gone. No books read again.

There is a popular notion going around in some circles today that children who see their parents reading books will grow up knowing about and reading books themselves. There is a point in this idea, although it is obvious. The matchmaking mother in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (in a day when women could not read so many words as they can now) boasted to a prospective suitor, "Excuse me, I'm going to read *a book!*" Just setting an example of reading will not automatically make our children into discerning, intelligent, discriminating readers. It depends on the way our reading affects our attitudes and outlook and relationships.

Why We Read

There are any number of good reasons why we read books. We read for enjoyment and pleasure. What we enjoy dictates what we read. If we like suspense, we are probably devotees of westerns and detective stories. If we like intellectual argument, a book of philosophy will be relaxing reading for us. If we admire artistic craftsmanship, we respond to a nicely constructed novel. Much reading for sheer pleasure is uncritical reading. We simply relax and let the writer take us where he will, and we return to our own world of reality refreshed by the escape and perhaps richer for this exposure to beauty (if what we have read has been a work of real artistic excellence).

We read to gain understanding. Perhaps we need a skillful analysis of the current social scene. We are looking for the thinker or writer who can marshal facts and impressions into some kind of coherent pattern, because we ourselves have a mass of random ideas that need organization.

Books of another kind give us needed information, answers to factual questions, or directions for planting a rose garden, or building a hi-fi set. Some people today have to do a certain amount of reading in order to keep up with their jobs. New technical journals and books have to be read in the fast-changing worlds of agriculture, law, medicine, theology, chemistry, engineering, etc.

An important reason for reading today is to balance the practical and the factual with works of beauty and books that uncover a deeper dimension in our experience. It is no maligning of science itself to remark that the scientific attitude has influenced our thinking in almost every area of life and so has reduced (and hence impoverished) our world to a factual and practical prison. Beauty is valued for its usefulness; so we have functional art. Religion is either ignored or forced to fit into the limits of what is reasonable or practical; so we have lost the capacity to live by faith. To counteract these influences, we need to rediscover in our book-reading the world beyond sense and sight. It is significant that one of the best novelists of our day, Sir Charles Percy Snow, himself a scientist, demonstrates in his novels this need for understanding well

the underside of our practical and factual world.

A perennial reason why we read is that poets, novelists, and dramatists use their gifts to help us understand ourselves, to know what makes each one of us the "I" he is. The best artists of the written word disclose truths about the human struggle that show us the misery and grandeur of being men. It sometimes takes a portrayal of an extreme situation—such as O'Neill gives us in his play *Long Day's Journey Into Night*—to shed light on the potential for good and evil in a more "normal" human relationship; yet all of us know that the dramatist does not really exaggerate the sordidness of our own personal tragedy: he only brings into the open what we prefer to hide.

Probably few of us analyze why we read what we read. We just read, and don't ask ourselves why. This fact demonstrates that reading books is more or less a habit—and both those who do it more and those who do it less are helping to develop their children's attitudes toward books.

Discrimination and Debate

Parents probably shouldn't want their children to be quantitative voracious readers, like some ten-year-olds (and older) who devour everything in sight in the pure excitement of acquiring this new and wonderful skill of recognizing words. But parents should want to develop that sensitivity and capacity for intelligent discrimination that mark the mature reader of books. The success today of article condensations and book abridgements indicates not that we have less time for reading (as the ads claim) but less capacity to be discriminating in what we read. Now that the paperback book market produces works of such high quality, we have lost our last excuse for not buying the best—the excuse of expense.

When we read a book we engage in a delightful and exciting battle between the writer's bias and our own. What Joyce Cary, the English novelist, says of teachers applies to writers as well:

"Teaching, in short, like everything else that con-

veys a meaning in words, is an art, and you can't be a good artist unless you believe you are giving a truth. The most effective teacher will always be biased, for the chief force in teaching is confidence and enthusiasm. To give merely information is to write on the sand. For it is his function to form a character of feeling about ideas, and to do that he has to have pretty strong feelings himself, as well as clear ideas." [1]

If this is true, then the reader should bring to the reading an equally strong enthusiasm for *his* ideas, and the engagement between writer and reader should bring out the best in both.

Is that the way we write and read today? There are those who say not. The charge is made against writers —particularly writers of some modern fiction—that they have no feeling, no point of view, about the characters they create. Elsewhere in his book *Art and Reality,* Cary says:

"All writers have, and must have, to compose any kind of story, some picture of the world, and of what is right and wrong in that world. And the great writers are obsessed with their theme." [1]

Much modern fiction—say these critics—has no morality, no view of what is right and wrong in the world. To say this is to say that these writers have no real understanding of man, of human nature, so that they cannot in their writing create real human beings. They write about ghosts—or ghouls. And, incidentally, they are not great writers; they are hacks.

Cary himself, as one of our century's great novelists, is an exception to this charge against modern fiction. He has a grasp of human nature that is profound and a compassion for men that is moving and deep. But in order to know this and believe this about him—or in order to make the opposite judgment about any other writer—the reader must himself be equipped with a point of view. The question is, Do we readers today have a point of view that we can use in intelligent and fruitful debate with the writers we read? [2]

If we do not, it may be because we have been overcome with awe of the experts. The problems we face as a people today—even our religious problems—seem more complicated than they used to be, and we lose our confidence that we can understand them, let alone deal with them. So we leave the job to the specialists, the experts, and become indifferent citizens about the political implications of nuclear physics or the deep, underlying causes of juvenile delinquency. If we must read anything on a complex problem, it has to be so simplified and abbreviated that the most untutored mind can understand it. Men in high positions who have momentous decisions to make require that the issues involved be summarized in a one-page memo. The excuse is time; the real reason is that we no longer have the zeal or the equipment to wrestle with difficult problems of the mind.

"Adventures of the Mind" at Home

When we ask what all this means for life at home as parents of children and youth, we begin to see what effect our attitude toward reading might have on the growing minds around us.

In their children's earliest years, parents read *very* elementary books to them. Baffled by their enthusiasm for *Raggedy Ann,* parents try to divert the children to something they think is better—and something they themselves can stomach, like *Winnie-the-Pooh* or *Robin Hood* or *The Wind in the Willows.* Maybe it works and maybe it doesn't; children are all different. But parents are beginning to teach discrimination, even though it is *their* discrimination.

After the tortuous stage of "I hit the ball. Jack hit the ball. See Sally run" is over—it doesn't last too long, it only seems that way—children begin to read for themselves. Before long they will be able to express opinions about the ideas in the books they read. The battle of the biases has begun. (Incidentally, whet their critical faculties on TV commercials. They need to learn "buyer beware" as soon as possible.)

The day will come when they begin to pick up the books around the house in order to read what their parents have been reading. It may come as a surprise to them that that stodgy old character in the lounge chair has been enjoying *Lady Chatterly's Lover* (or some of Lawrence's better books, and he did write better ones). This may open the door for better understanding between parents and their searching, rebellious young ones.

It would be good if the books children picked up at home represented many different shades of opinion. Most of us tend toward greater conservatism as we get older, and young people are natural liberals. Adults who no longer have inquiring minds can easily kill that revolutionary spirit or, as bad, be unable to keep it within reasonable bounds.

In due time the son will know more than his father does in the area of the younger person's special training. A father educated in the humanities may have scarcely anything to talk about (other than the grandchildren and his own arthritis) with his son who is a physicist. But this father can anticipate the situation if he will open the world of beauty and art to his son with a scientific bent of mind. There will still be a basis for conversation between them. Furthermore, the battle between the two cultures of science and the humanities is one of the lively and important struggles of our age, and the home is one place for direct engagement in the battle.

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[1] From *Art and Reality.* Volume 20 of World Perspectives. Copyright, 1958, by Arthur Lucius. Michael Cary and David Alexander Ogilvie, Executors, Estate of Joyce Cary. Used by permission of Harper & Brothers.

[2] The articles in Unit II of *The Christian Round Table* on *The Adventures of Augie March,* by Saul Bellow, introduce us to another novelist with a moral concern—but one to whom we must bring our own point of view.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 4

Before the Discussion

The main point of this article is that book-reading (or the lack of it) in the home has a strong effect on the development of the persons in the home. It is not so much a matter of reading a lot of books or setting a good example by reading books. It is more a matter of reading with discrimination and bringing critical judgment to bear on what is read.

Although we complain that we do not have time to read books, our real problem may be elsewhere. We may secretly feel that reading books is actually not very important for our growth as persons or as parents, and we may despise as "eggheads" those who think that ideas matter. Or we may realize that we do not have the skill to read intelligently, that our critical faculties are dulled by the demands of daily work or the smiling box in the living room (the TV).

It would be well to discuss frankly how the parents in the group feel about book-reading: why they do it, if they do; why they neglect it, if they do not read very much. It is important also to discuss the matter of the point of view we bring to our reading. Do we have one? Where does it come from? And a third main issue is the conflict of the two cultures—the scientific and the culture of the humanities. What do we think about this? Is it a real conflict? Is there blame on both sides? What are the consequences of this conflict?

Questions for Discussion

1. What attitude do our children have about the value of book-reading? Where did they get this attitude?
2. What attitude do we want them to have? Is it the same attitude we have ourselves?
3. Does the author of the article make too great claims for book-reading? Is it really as important as he thinks it is? What is the basis for our judgment about this?
4. How do we feel about allowing our young people to read some of the sexier books of fiction? Should we have such books around the house?
5. What books have provided us with a chance for good discussions with our children and with our young people?
6. Is a bias the same thing as a point of view? (The author equates the two.) Where do we get the point of view we bring to our reading? Where do our children get theirs?
7. Does the church have anything to do with developing our faculties for discriminating reading and intelligent debate? Should it? Should the church censor our reading, directly or indirectly?
8. How do we view the conflict between the two cultures that is mentioned in the article? Is it a real conflict? Is it important? Have we faced it in our homes?

For Further Reading

Persons interested in pursuing the issues raised in this discussion could do it by reading and discussing together two short but profound and important books:

Art and Reality, by Joyce Cary (Harper & Brothers, 1958; $3.00).

The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution, by C. P. Snow (Cambridge University Press, 1959; $1.75).

Times Change, but Not Teen-Agers

By Frank M. Weiskel

"Like it's cool, Daddy-o, real coool!"

"What's cool, Tom?"

"That hot trumpet, Dad. Don't you dig that best? Oh, man, that's crazy and way out and kinda ginchy. Yeah!"

"Well, it sounds like so much noise to me, and you'd better turn it off and get to your homework."

And All That Noise

This conversation took place between a father in his forties and his eldest son, a nice lad, seemingly normal, in his teens. The home is a normal one, at least the son thinks so. Normal means that the radios are always on in the boys' rooms, blaring forth some of this "real cool noise." As a person who went to college where study hall was kept each night with all radios silent from 7 to 10 P.M., it is hard to understand how the present generation can manage to concentrate with radios or record players competing for their interest. And yet it cannot be denied that they seem to manage. Have they greater powers of concentration than we had? Or has all music become "Muzak," background noise to motivate people and to create moods?

Most parents in such "normal" homes face a similar situation. Our young people have been reared in a noisy age. Even as infants many of them were subjected to noises, and they learned to sleep through them. There was a time when everybody in the home kept tip-toe quiet when baby was asleep. This is not so any longer. Baby can sleep through a party going on in the next room and often does. It may be that *homo sapiens* is growing some sort of noise filter in his inner ear that enables him to ignore the noises of this modern cacophony called contemporary life. One fact is certain. Man today is more afraid of silence than he is of noise. He doesn't listen to music; he uses it as background for doing something else. If he is alone in his apartment, the radio supplies a pleasant, reassuring noise; it gives him the feeling that somebody is there. He is not alone. Being alone might force a man

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to think, and thinking in our kind of culture is disturbing.

It should not be surprising, then, to the average contemporary parent, that his teen-agers prefer what we call background noise to good music. We have reared them that way. Even if we have tried to keep our homes free from the more destructive influences of second-rate music, our young people have been exposed to it in school and among their friends and in recreation centers. Take the example of Christmas music! The lovely carols of the Christmas season first used in church together with the Christmas story are now used as commercial stimulation. Hearing it blared forth from loudspeakers in every shop and department store, it is hard to sing "Silent Night! Holy Night!" with true feeling and meaning by the time Christmas Day comes. Nothing is holy for the commercial greed of our culture. Christmas carols are not used as songs of praise to God, but as sales stimulators. Is it any wonder that our children no longer take them seriously, and that they put on the same level "White Christmas" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem"? If our young people seem confused in their musical tastes, is it their fault? Have we not brought them to this stage with our indiscriminate use of music for our own purposes rather than for the purposes the composer intended? A generation that prefers noise to music may be the price we have to pay for the success we have achieved as hucksters.

When our own children were small, Mrs. Weiskel and I lived in the New York area, and our radio was always tuned to a classical music station. One day it was inadvertently changed, and my son came running to me and said, "Daddy, the radio is broken!" It is quite possible for children to be reared on a diet of good music. In music, as in other things, children imitate the tastes of their parents. A home in which good music is played and created produces children who appreciate it and, in time, come to prefer it. At least, the children will have a basis for evaluating other music if they have heard the masters first. If in their adolescence they seem to reject the standards of the home, we need not be too concerned. Most of us, after all, lived through the period of jazz that produced songs like "Yes, We Have No Bananas," "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More," and "The Music Goes Down and Round," but few of us would prefer that music to the classics of our day.

The real need is for a foundation of taste. If our children learn what has been considered great music and why, they will always have a standard for judgment. This foundation can best be laid by the home as it fosters the appreciation and creation of good music.

It may be necessary for a parent to enter into the contemporary musical arena and face the wild beasts that prowl there. Only by so doing can he feel the visceral quality of music like that used in "Peter Gunn." Its rhythms come close to recreating the jungle beat of tom-toms, and its melodies are agonizing and satirical. Compare them with a Bach harpsicord concerto, and you will find that there is beat there too. But the one forces you to tap your feet and snap your fingers, whereas the other lifts the spirit in rhythmical interlacing of melody. It is easy to see why the teen-ager is more interested in "Peter Gunn" than in Bach. The jungle beat speaks more to his adolescent condition than does the soul-lifting music of Bach. *But*—the average teen-ager will grow up and out of his visceral stage. Then he must be introduced to something more meaningful, something more mature, than the beating of bongo drums. The parent who knows this is not driven to despair even by the "coolest cat" who may happen to be his son or daughter. A sense of understanding and some appreciation of the struggle an adolescent faces in this "payola-paved" society will enable him to weather the storm and lead his offspring to a matured sense of taste in music.

Parents Might Also Read Mad *Magazine*

A similar problem exists in the area of reading for our teen-agers. No person is born with a taste for comic books—or for the classics, either. The tastes people have in their teens come from the culture that surrounds them. Their reading habits are fostered early in this day of mass communication. As soon as our boys learned to read words, they started to read the advertisements on billboards along the highway and the wonderfully edifying material on cereal boxes. This is a far cry from the day when children learned their A B C's in the *New England Primer* by repeating "In Adam's fall, we sinned all." The level of literature in a commercial on television is not very high, and we should not be surprised if our children reflect it. Long before they go to school, children are subjected to language and communication that do not offer the highest standards in taste and content.

One of the ways in which this can be offset is by the efforts of the home. Normal children love to hear stories even when they are very young. If parents read to their children regularly, they can do much to inculcate good taste at an early age. Wonderful books like *Winnie-the-Pooh,* the *Mary Poppins* stories, and *At the Back of the North Wind,* to say nothing of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* are available in attractive editions for use with young children. Of course, it takes time to sit and read to children, but it is time well invested. A child who has had such a foundation will reflect it in later life in his reading habits. Even the Bible stories can be used with choice and discretion. One of the most popular series of Bible stories in our family is the rather unorthodox Roark Bradford series, including "Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun," and "Ol' King David and the Philistine Boys." The boys just roar at the antics and situations described in these stories based on Biblical incidents. Any parent with even a slight gift for mimicry can have a wonderful time reading these to his children. It will also give him

Too soon a teen-ager

an opportunity to refer to the Biblical text and tell the story straight.

Many parents make the mistake of just reading stories to their children straight. It is much more fun to make all the noises in the "Gerald McBoing-Boing" story than to read it straight. Children love imitation and mimicry, and an adult's dignity will not suffer too much if he enters into the spirit of the story and re-creates it for his children with sound effects. After all, our children live in an age where all they see and read on the television is accompanied by sound. *Grimm's Fairy Tales* can be pretty grim reading without some imagination, but make the sound of the witch or the dragon and you can fill a child's heart with glee. The child will always remember the story and want to read it himself later.

If your sophisticated adolescent reaches for *Mad* magazine before *Moby Dick,* don't worry too much. Take a look at the magazine yourself and see what is in it. Some of the copy is pretty clever and a spoof on our society. It punctures much of the pretensions of our adult life, which may help to explain its popularity among our teen-agers. It fits in with the teen-ager's mood of breaking-out-of-his-shell. He is learning to judge the life around him; he is learning that things are not what they seem, and seeing is not believing. All this will hold him in good stead as he matures and must assume responsibility in adult life. The one thing teen-agers can't stand is "phoniness," and much of the literature they prefer is directed against it.

The Truth Can Prevail

Some parents do not worry about *Mad* magazine, but they do stand aghast when they see their sons or daughters reading salacious, vulgar, or downright sexy literature. The first thing to ask is: Who publishes this kind of literature, and for what purpose? Is it not another example of the carelessness of our adult world—in which almost anything will be done if it is momentarily profitable? Teen-agers do not publish their own pornographic literature. They are introduced to it by unscrupulous adults hoping to make easy money. We need to hang our heads in shame when the true facts are revealed. It is not our teen-agers who are to blame, but the adult world around them. Of such people it is said in the New Testament, "It would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea" (*Mark 9: 42*).

There is one redeeming fact about all this. If it happens to your teen-ager, don't wail and moan and reach for the sackcloth and ashes. In all likelihood, he does not fully understand what is intended, for his life experience does not bring the content to it that only an adult life can bring. Young people don't always "get the point," although they think they do. We may make the mistake of assuming that they understand this kind of literature from our adult viewpoint. How can they, at fifteen or sixteen? In illustration, let me cite an example: One day I saw one of my boys stuffing a magazine into his jacket. I asked him what it was, and he blushed and told me that it was a magazine. Upon taking it out, I saw that it was a "girlie" magazine that he had received from one of his friends. We looked it over together and did see some of the most revealing photographs of females. After we finished I asked him why he was so interested, to which he replied, "Well, I just wanted to see what they looked like with their clothes off!" To me that was a natural comment of curiosity more than perversity. Living as he does in an all-male household, I could understand why he was curious. He is just as curious about chemistry now, and it is considered laudable.

As parents we must be careful lest we underrate our own children. They are at least as good as we are, and if we continue to surround them in our homes with the best we know, in all likelihood they will adopt our tastes and imitate our standards. If we are prudish and phony, they will react against our prudishness and false standards. But as they grow older, we can discuss with them the dilemmas of our society where on the one hand the major advertising medium is "cheesecake photography," and, on the other, we are shocked at what seems to be an excessive interest in sex among our young people. We can't have it both ways: sex as a plaything and commercial tool, and adolescents who are "normally" and "wholesomely" oblivious to their sexual nature. At some point we have to stand up to the culture and say a loud "No!" Then, perhaps, our children may grow to see that there are areas of life, even in their own homes, where honesty and common sense overcome vulgarity. The hope that this growth will take place thus makes the "No!" worth saying.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 5

Before the Discussion

The adolescent presents peculiar problems. Parents who presently have adolescents in their families will not find this a surprising statement. But parents who presently have only small children should reckon right now with the fact that these babies, infants, children, juniors, pre-adolescents, and so on, will shortly be adolescents. The adolescent of today was the baby of yesterday. Therefore, parents can best prepare for what they know is coming up. And they should know what is coming up, not in order to escape the problem, but to lay a groundwork for dealing successfully with it.

Probably the major factor causing adolescent problems is the increasing power of the adolescent's society on his life. The adolescent is semi-detached. Therefore he is exposed to all kinds of new and often very powerful social pressures. Because he is older and is bigger and stronger physically than before, he can be more independent and more mobile. This means he finds himself in new situaitons, exposed to new experiences, and so on. He can easily be confused by the new things that are happening in his life. He has already demonstrated that he can be taken in. He is vitally affected by what goes on around him. The only course available to parents in dealing with this problem is to teach the adolescent new means of discrimination. The tools of discrimination that he has learned in childhood simply are not adequate for these new classes of experience. Therefore, he needs new tools of discrimination with which to deal with the new materials and situations that are constantly thrusting themselves in upon him.

The article is particularly helpful at this point. It shows that new tools of discrimination can be forged in the realms of music and literature. In each of these areas the author has particularly helpful things to say. He does not offer these as authoritative, once-for-all answers, but the pattern he establishes certainly is available to any parent of an adolescent.

The situation is never helpless. Even if the adolescent has had few opportunities to exercise discrimination in his whole life, the situation is still not helpless. Of course, the adolescent is much better prepared to exercise discrimination if he has had opportunities in his childhood to make choices and to find out what is good, better, best, and what is bad, worse, and worst. The article is helping us to see that the home is a school in which children learn how to make choices. And this means that the home is the place in which the child comes to learn, through all kinds of choice situations and from the experience of having made lots of good and poor choices, what his own family considers to be worth-while. Eventually children may rebel against their family's estimate of what is worth-while, but even this possibility would not exist for them if they do not know what the family's standards are.

The focus of the article, and consequently of the discussion, is clearly not in the area of standards (of what constitutes good music, for instance) but in the area of helping the adolescent (and the child who will shortly be an adolescent) to forge workable tools of discrimination.

Questions for Discussion

1. Some parents do not allow their children to come into contact with bad social and cultural pressures. They do not, for instance, allow their children to listen to low-brow music, and they do not own a television set. Comment on this approach as a means of teaching discrimination to children.

2. Does the adolescent have the right to listen, to read, and to look at whatever is available to him? What is this right? Where did he get it? Does he deserve it?

3. Reconstruct the scene described in the last section of the article. A father comes upon his son, who tries to hide a "girlie" magazine. Discuss the way in which the father handled the situation. What other courses might he have followed? Would you have acted differently?

4. What kind of childhood is the best preparation for adolescence?

5. What makes adolescents such a problem for parents?

6. Would you feel that you had been a successful parent if, when grown, your son or daughter rejects the standards of your home?

7. How should parents deal with an adolescent who thinks, all of a sudden, that church and church school and youth fellowship are "square"?

For Further Reading

You might consider the following resource as a basis for further thought or discussion at a later meeting:

The Vanishing Adolescent, by Edgar Z. Friedenberg (The Beacon Press, Inc.; $2.95). A study of the adolescent's struggle to succeed in our society.

Note: The PDG articles in the next issue of Crossroads will be devoted largely to the adolescent-parent situation.

Fear

By Paul W. Pruyser

By now most of us have become so convinced that ours is an age of anxiety that we hardly have the guts to rebel—at most we resign ourselves to it with helpless indignation. But if it is true that fear created the gods, as Statius said nineteen hundred years ago, we might well try to make a positive evaluation of fear, and begin by asking with healthy curiosity, "What does fear do *for* us?" rather than, "What does fear do *to* us?"

What does a child do when his hand touches the fire?

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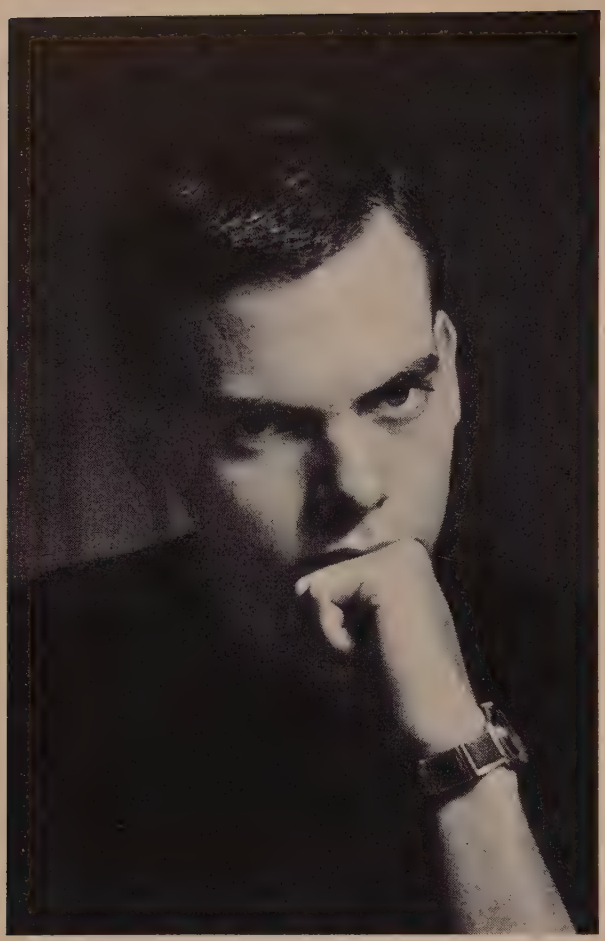
He not only withdraws his hand quickly, but also stays way from fires in the future. Similarly, when a person s in mountain country, he stays at safe distance from precipice.When we are learning to drive a car, we lay it safe by driving slowly at first. The soldier fears he enemy. Many dogs fear cats, after a serious scramble. In all these cases the animal or the person has earned something: He has learned to fear, which is n emotional way of saying that he has learned that here are dangers. But, in the wake of such fears, there ollows a typical new reaction: one avoids what one ears. Fear can thus be defined as a useful device that nables an individual to stay away from what has proved to be harmful to him. But there is a string ttached to this device: *the scope of the world with which we deal has shrunk.*

Living in a smaller world, because of fear, may have ts satisfactions. It is easier to master a small world han a large one. But our world can become too small, when we have many fears, and then we are likely to miss out on other satisfactions that we should otherwise appreciate. This is precisely what happens in *morbid* fear, for instance, in phobias (sick fears). A young boy may have a phobia of horses and thus anxiously stay away from all places where horses could be met: pastures, streets, rodeos, and summer camps. Even pictures of horses may frighten him, and thus he may have to forego a trip to the museum or may have to stay away from his coloring books. A housewife may develop a germ phobia and avoid touching doorknobs, money, sinks, and the laundry. She will miss many satisfactions (though much drudgery too!), but in that case the family will also be greatly handicapped. An important executive who develops a phobia of high places will fail to attend his board meetings on the fifteenth floor of a downtown skyscraper. In all these cases the world of the person has become too small, and the intended mastery fails, though it is still a form of control. Instead of mastery and satisfaction, there is now misery and suffering on the part of somebody, sometimes whole families. Fear is now doing something *to* us, instead of *for* us.

Not all fears are the result of direct experience with the outside world. Some fears are learned before chances for firsthand experience have occurred. They are taught by parents, teachers, and playmates, by newspapers and political campaigners. This is particularly true of fear of strangers, often seen in isolated hamlets or rural areas or even in whole countries. It is true of everything called "prejudice." The trouble with such fears is that they are even more persistent, more irrational, and more sweeping than the fears produced by direct experience. A new experience is not likely to correct such fears because new experience, uncontaminated by fear, is simply not allowed. Prejudice of whites against Negroes, of "simple folk" against "eggheads," of Protestants against Roman Catholics, does not allow a person to step out of his acquired fear and take a fresh look at things. The look simply is doomed to be very unfresh. Prejudice also calls our attention to a peculiar transformation of the original fear into something else, such as contempt, aggressiveness, pride, denial of reality, spurious rationalizations, or misuse of the intellect. Although fear originally leads to flight or avoidance, these subtle transformations may lead the fearing person to attack, provoke, or challenge the object of his fear.

Note that in all these examples there is an object outside the person that instills the fear: stoves, mountains, horses, germs, strangers. Because they are outside objects, they can be avoided, although at some price. Not all fears have such objects—there are also fears without known objects. This is where the word *anxiety* comes in. Anxiety is a form of fear that relates to something internal, and most of the time the person does not know what he is anxious about. Anxiety is often felt as something very general, pervading one's whole being, and showing itself in many forms: jitteriness, nervousness, restlessness, the feeling of being hemmed in, the feeling of mounting tension. It also shows in the workings of our body: fatigue, loss of appetite, inability to fall asleep. In many of these forms one can still see the original usefulness of simple fear, in the sense that the person is on the alert for possible dangers. Indeed, anxiety has at first the effect of making us extra alert. We become suspicious, we hear too much (bad talk about ourselves), we see too sharply (the motives of other people), we think too generally ("*all* men are brutes").

Although the anxious person can rarely say what he is anxious about, psychological studies suggest that there are internal, hidden, unconscious objects of anxiety. Such objects, of course, cannot be tables or horses or mountains; they consist of strivings, longings, aspirations, urges, wishes, temptations, and many other psychic "things." These reside in us and prompt us to action, and yet we ourselves may not know at all which wish or which urge is the object of our anxiety. This peculiar ignorance is an inevitable by-product of our complexity as human beings. We know at any given time only a fraction of the contents of our own inner household, because much of it is, or can be, a threat to something else in us. A strong wish to vilify somebody who has harmed us may run counter to the idea of moral goodness that we have about ourselves. Thus, even the thought of revenge is distasteful to us in some way. It acts as an internal threat, a real danger, from somewhere inside us to our being as a whole. And we react to this danger as we do to all dangers: we develop fear of the wish and carefully avoid it. We take flight from it. But how can we, when the dangerous object is inside ourselves? By a specialized form of "walking away" called repression. We shut the urge, the wish, even the mere thought of it, out of our awareness. We "forget" it quite effectively, so that under ordinary circumstances we could not recall the wish or the thought even when we want to. The wish has become



The watchful eyes of fear.

*un*conscious. Note again the parallel with fear: the usefulness of marking something as a threat, so as to defend ourselves against it—the usefulness of avoiding it by special measures—the shrinking of our world, in this case the inner world, as a consequence.

But just as stoves and horses and mountains will continue to exist and assert themselves even when we take flight from them, so will a repressed and unconscious wish continue to assert itself. It finds an expression in disguise, under a mask, under false pretenses. By some quite automatic process that is the product of our make-up and our learning and our circumstances, we unconsciously help to bring the disguise about. The best defense does not necessarily consist in running away fast (repression). One may prefer a sneak attack, guerrilla warfare, or engage in a lengthy and sophisticated debate with the enemy about the conditions for a treaty. Or one may start a whispering campaign, pick a scapegoat, or even seduce the enemy by bestowing favors upon him. There are many ways of dealing with enemies, and each of us has found his special technique for dealing with "internal enemies."

Thank God we have such defenses. Life would be unbearable without them. If we were to act consciously upon every wish, upon the slightest urge, without distinction between safe and unsafe objects or situations, our lives would soon end in chaos or death. Let us remember again that fear and anxiety serve a protective function, beneficial to the individual and society.

But we should also clearly see the next thing, which is just as important: fear and anxiety, in helping us to avoid dangers, also cut down on possible pleasures. They inhibit exploration, they are a drain on our energies. Under their impact we may gain a temporary relief or comfort, but only at a price! All our defensive maneuvers cost something to us or to others. The housewife with the germ phobia is harassed, though not so panicky as she would be without that phobia, and her family have to make additional sacrifices in their comfort. Prejudice not only makes the prejudiced person appear stupid, but it also takes a heavy toll from the people he is prejudiced against. And the boy who, out of a distorted sense of guilt, embarks upon acts of vandalism until he finds himself in the hands of the police and finally punished (a form of penance he may have been unconsciously looking for) has meanwhile worked much hardship on others. Somebody is always paying a price.

It makes eminent sense, then, to look at the economic aspects of fear and anxiety. From this point of view it appears that although some defensive maneuvers are useful and cost little, other maneuvers cost far too much in proportion to the problem they set out to solve. The child who can admit that he is angry at his mother for not being allowed out to play is far better off than his friend who, under the domination of an exacting sense of pride, cannot tolerate such nasty feelings and perhaps has no other resource than to develop a cold and distant attitude toward all women. The fears lying behind homosexuality sever the bond between an individual and half mankind! The fears that find deviant expression in asthma or in ulcers entail much physical pain and high hospital bills.

These examples lead to one more consideration. Fear and anxiety, no matter how induced or by what, are themselves very unpleasant emotions. If we say that fear is a danger signal, as we have stated, we must now add that not only the object it warns against but the signal itself is felt as unpleasant. Thus, our defensive maneuvers to evade the dangerous objects or

tuations inside or outside ourselves are at the same me defenses against fears or anxieties themselves. ence we all go through much mental trapeze work nd pyrotechnics in order to alleviate the *feeling* of nxiety. This has impressed some ancient philosophers much that one of them has stated that there is not thing we do or a word we say that is not in some way esigned to take anxiety away from our minds. I think his is what Statius alluded to when he held fear responsible for the creation of gods. There is always a ndency to use one's god or even to make one's god as n antidote to the special fears one has. We ban anxty from our minds, by any means at our disposal.

Fear and anxiety, then, exert enormous power over s. But we are far from helpless in regard to them. We use all kinds of defensive maneuvers in order to ope with the dangers they signal, in order to dispel he unpleasantness of anxiety. Some defenses are costly nd not very effective, others are very effective at little cost. Symptoms of mental illness may be regarded as costly and rather ineffectual defenses against anxiety and, at the same time, as disguised expressions of wishes the individual regards dangerous.

One last consideration: People vary enormously in regard to the amount of anxiety they can bear without having to take recourse to costly defenses. It is important to be able to tolerate the anxieties inherent in living. If one's tolerance is high, anxiety and fear assume an entirely new aspect, which is worth-while stressing: they become motivating forces spurring us on to great accomplishments. Without anxiety, the student will rarely prepare himself for his examinations. Without anxiety, the artist will not produce artistic works. Without anxiety, our lives would become dangerously comfortable. Without anxiety, we should have little reason to worship God, or even to think of him.

Anxiety, then, has many faces. It can be constructive and destructive; it can make us and break us.

DISCUSSION LEADS FOR TOPIC 6

Before the Discussion

The usefulness of this article for arents is found in the clarity with hich fear is pictured. We find that here are various kinds and degrees f fear. We find that fear can be roused by external objects—objects utside the person—or by something nternal. Anxiety is fear that is roused by something within a person nd often has no apparent reason for eing. This picture of the kinds of ear needs careful examination. Parnts need to understand about fear in hemselves in order to understand and eal sympathetically with fear in their hildren. Not understanding could be rippling to parents themselves.

Important as the picture of fear is, he article's true focus is a way to ook at fear. Dr. Pruyser suggests we sk ourselves, "What does fear do *or* us?" rather than "What does fear lo *to* us?" At many points in his discussion he shows the usefulness of ear and urges us to see fear's positive haracter. Fear, like anger (discussed n an article last quarter), should be hought of as a necessary kind of lefense against an often threatening nvironment. Surely life would be detroyed without the alertness to anger that is brought about by fear.

Furthermore, the author helps us o see that there is a significant difference between healthy fear and sick fear (for instance, a healthy fear of horses that may be present in a child who knows that he is not well enough co-ordinated to be safe on a horse, and the sick fear of horses that is present in a child who fears everything about horses for reasons that actually have little to do with horses). This kind of distinction is an important one for parents to have in mind as they deal with fear in their children—and in themselves. Healthy fear can be dealt with and lived with, and, when necessary, grown out of, but sick fear needs understanding, new experiences, and professional help.

In discussing the subject of fear, the leader might want parents in the group to discuss first the picture of fear, then, a point of view toward fear, and finally, the distinction between healthy fear and phobias.

Questions for Discussion

1. Think through the experiences of the past week in your home. Can you illustrate with concrete experiences the kinds of fear that Dr. Pruyser pictures?

2. When you see fear in your child, how are you most likely to react: forcing the child into the situation of which he is afraid, overlooking the situation, interpreting to the child the meaning of his fear? Which course is the best course, whether or not you follow it? Why?

3. What were your most vivid childhood fears? Why? What are your children afraid of? Why?

4. Discuss Dr. Pruyser's analysis of anxiety. In what sense can anxiety "make us or break us"? Does Dr. Pruyser use the term in a way that is new to you? Is his analysis helpful?

5. The article notes a significant difference between healthy and morbid or sick fear. What is that difference?

6. How would you deal with sick fear discovered in a member of your family? Can new experiences correct sick fear as they possibly can correct prejudice? What professional resources could you use?

7. Do you fear fear? Why or why not?

For Further Reading

You might consider the following resources as a basis for further thought or discussion at a later meeting or meetings:

"Help Them Face Their Real Fears," by Eda J. Le Shan, *Parents'* magazine, Jan., 1960.

"Science Looks at Your Fears," by John E. Gibson, *Today's Health,* Jan., 1960.

"Where We Get Our Fears," by Janice Tyrwhitt, *Science Digest,* Jan., 1960.

Anxiety in Christian Experience, by Wayne E. Oates (The Westminster Press; $3.00).

Over the Crossroads Desk

WHEN a speaker (or a writer) says that "Christianity is merely a matter of . . . ," that's the time to begin disbelieving, no matter what he says Christianity is merely a matter of. Attempts to reduce the Christian faith to one mode of action, one style of behavior, one kind of believing, that is, to compress its extraordinary multiplicity into a single, simple, principle-like statement, inevitably pare down the Christian faith. And more. A trimmed Christian faith is not just truncated. It has been subtly done in, changed, that is, into something it never allows itself to become—a philosophy of life, or a set of principles, or a supernaturally delivered report.

The urgency with which the Christian faith commends itself to us may finally be responsible for attempts to get it into one manageable statement. For instance: Once gripped by the specific Christian demand for true neighbor love, a person can easily and with full passion say that neighbor love is the central feature of the Christian faith. But the Christian faith is not surely reducible to neighbor love—to the fine anguish and great joy of "caring." The Christian faith is far more. Another person, who begins to see in the worship of the Christian church the shape of the covenant God has entered into with mankind, will soon be in the dangerous position of thinking that the worship-covenant experience is the main concern of the Christian faith. But it isn't. Gripped by urgency, that person especially must see himself standing on the edge of fanaticism, and worse, of idolatry.

The great mistake of eager Christians turns out to be arrogance, the arrogance involved in knowing too much about God and the Scriptures and the course that life takes. Eagerness is not the mistake, any more than urgency and passion are mistakes. These are the blessings of a God who teaches us to care and provides us with insight into the covenant and leads us to see Jesus Christ in his truth and glory. But going on to the next step, arguing mightily and preaching forcefully that Christianity is merely a matter of this or that—that is the mistake the serious consequences of which we seldom recognize.

The counsel of the great preacher of late Old Testament days is very much in order to the awakened, dynamic, *moved* Christians of today. He said:

"Guard your steps when you go to the house of God; to draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few." (*Eccl. 5: 1-2.*)

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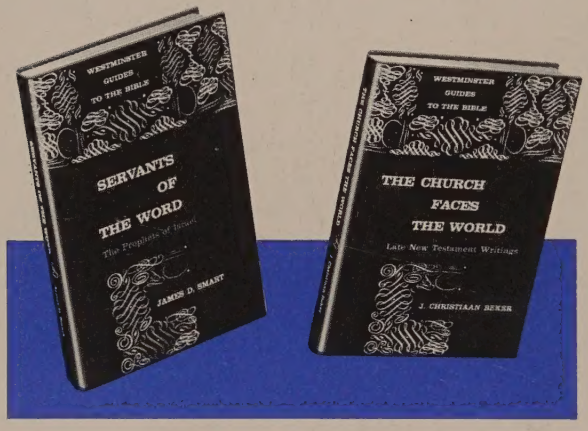
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